

Speaking the

**T R U T H
I N L O V E**

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Essays related to
A Statement, Chicago
Nineteen forty-five

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FOREWORD

On September 6 and 7, 1945, a group of pastors and professors of the Missouri Synod met in Chicago for a discussion of a number of problems which are troubling the Lutheran Church in America, particularly the Missouri Synod. In background and experience these men differed widely. They came from every section of the United States. They represented nearly every part of the program of the Church. They were united, however, by a common love for the great heritage of the Lutheran Church and a common awareness of the unprecedented opportunities which are opening before the eyes of the present generation.

The conference was not without precedent. Throughout the history of the Missouri Synod the free gathering of brethren, united either by geographical proximity or by a common interest in certain phases of the work of the Church, had been an essential part of its continuing, democratic life. In 1926, 1937, 1940, and 1941 a series of meetings in Chicago, attended by pastors, professors and synodical officers, had devoted considerable time to a discussion of some of the same problems which were the immediate occasion for the conference in September, 1945. The earlier meetings had produced no results except a clarification of thought among the individuals who were able to attend. This was largely due to the fact that the essays which were presented were never given wider circulation. Meanwhile, the shift of the center of world Lutheranism to America had become increasingly evident. Furthermore, an apparently growing tendency in the Synodical Conference and elsewhere to substitute for the historic Lutheran loyalty to the power and imperatives of the Gospel a rigid, legalistic approach to the problems of the Church was becoming a matter of growing concern not only to the brethren assembled in Chicago, but also to a much larger number of pastors and laymen who were aware of the significance of recent events, both within the Missouri Synod and beyond its borders.

It should be noted that the evident and pressing problems of faith and life which were on the agenda of the Chicago meeting were also not without precedent in the history of the Lutheran Church. In fact, they have constituted a perennial danger to historic, confessional Christianity. As long as the Church is in the world and as long as the human heart and mind are what they are, there will always be the danger of legalism, of the substitution of man-made traditions for the fulness and freedom of the Gospel. The brethren gathered at Chicago were, therefore, conscious of the fact that the existing conditions were neither unprecedented nor, by the grace of God, beyond repair. It was equally clear, however, that the Lutheran Church had arrived at a point in its history in America at which certain undercurrents had to be brought to the surface and submitted to all the members of the clergy (and the laity) for a full and free examination. It was obvious that no single group of men could offer a solution for problems which reach so deep into the life of the Church. They could, however, formulate a series of statements which expressed their convictions and judgments and submit them to their

brethren throughout the Church for study and discussion. Such a procedure, they believed, would be thoroughly democratic and in keeping with the historic Lutheran respect for the rights and privileges of the individual pastor and his congregation.

The men who met at Chicago in September, 1945, were invited on the basis of their previously expressed interest in the problems which were to be considered. Unfortunately financial limitations made it impossible to include the many others who have held the same convictions and who have since the meeting expressed their agreement with the *Statement*. The spirit of the meeting was one of profound concern for the welfare of the Lutheran Church, specifically of the Missouri Synod, and a deep devotion to its manifest mission in our time. They were determined to speak the truth in love. They met in a spirit of humility, fully aware of the fact that the weaknesses which were disturbing them had also appeared in their own life and work. It is admittedly difficult to transfer the spirit and attitude of any meeting to the cold, printed page. All that we can do is to assure the reader of these lines in all sincerity that the spirit of the meeting is completely and finally expressed in the title of this volume which is now presented to the Church at large. We quote from the foreword to the essays as they were presented to district presidents of the Missouri Synod:

"The motives which prompted the *Statement* were pure and honorable. We who signed this document love our Savior. We love the Gospel. We love the Church, particularly also our dear Missouri Synod. We love the millions of blood-bought souls who are still without Christ. It was our sincere intention to render a helpful service to our Synod by discussing some of the vital problems which confront it today and thereupon present our convictions and opinions to our brethren in the ministry for their study and criticism. We were confident that the rank and file of our pastors were intellectually and morally competent to examine the *Statement* calmly and objectively. Even though it has aroused unfavorable comment in certain quarters, the general reaction to its message has demonstrated that our confidence in our brethren was well founded."

The fact that the distribution of the *Statement* has aroused so much interest is probably evidence of a healthy concern for doctrine and life throughout the Lutheran Church in America. It is, of course, true that the signers of the *Statement* cannot and should not be held responsible for the varying interpretations which have been placed on it by observers who are not always completely informed concerning the origin and spirit of the Chicago meeting. The only adequate and accurate interpretation of the *Statement* must be based on the words of the theses themselves and not on any imagined historical background. A few of the comments from extra-synodical observers which have come to the attention of the signers have been excellent; some, however, have completely misunderstood the purpose and intent of the *Statement*.

It was to be expected, of course, that the *Statement* which was derived from the essays and discussions of the Chicago meeting would reflect the weaknesses of our common humanity. Every human formulation of divine truth must, of necessity, be subject to the limitations of human speech. The only satisfactory test that can be applied to much documents is to measure them relentlessly against the words of Scripture.

On the other hand, it should be said with equal candor and emphasis that the positive theses of the *Statement* represent the considered convictions of the signers. They are not the result of hasty committee work. The signers

are persuaded that these statements, within the limitations of their brevity, and understood in the spirit of the eighth commandment, are expressive of sound, historic, confessional, orthodox Lutheranism. The antitheses, in which certain trends in the Church are deplored, are matters of human judgment and their validity may be debatable; the theses themselves, however, have earnestly attempted to set forth Scriptural truths which are not debatable. They reflect the position of the Lutheran Church at its greatest and best, the position of our fathers of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The reader of the *Statement* and the supporting essays should also be aware of the fact that the meeting in Chicago was not called for the purpose of promoting Lutheran Unity in America. It is evident, of course, that some of the theses have a direct bearing upon this problem; however, as the chairman also emphasized in his opening address at the conference, the meeting was not to concern itself with immediate, practical problems of Church polity. It was to devote its attention solely to fundamental principles and to the possible dangers confronting the Missouri Synod if these principles are neglected or forgotten. In this connection it should also be noted that the *Statement* does not advocate the principle or practice of selective fellowship. The emphasis on congregational rights and duties in Thesis VI is merely a restatement of the ancient Lutheran position which has always jealously guarded the central place of the local congregation and pastor in determining matters of faith and life under the Word. It is so important for our life and work that it was specifically included in the Constitution of the Missouri Synod in 1847 (see paragraph "Relation of Congregation to Synod").

In addition to the essays in support of the *Statement* we have been asked by a number of brethren to reprint the significant theses on "Unevangelical Practice" which were submitted to the convention of the Central District of the Missouri Synod in 1862. Some of these theses are referred to in the essays presented in this volume. As reported by Dr. William Arndt when they were published in the Concordia Theological Monthly for May, 1945, these theses were very probably presented by the Rev. H. C. Schwan, then president of the Central District and later president of the Missouri Synod. Theses 25 to 32 were not discussed by the Central District, due to lack of time in the sessions, but were printed with the first twenty-four in the proceedings of the convention. The entire thirty-two are submitted in a translation which is largely the work of the sainted P. T. Buszin, the late Superintendent of Schools of the Northern Illinois district.

It was probably inevitable that some sections of the *Statement* would be misunderstood. We have already specifically repudiated the charge that selective fellowship is advocated in Thesis VI. In oral and written comments on the *Statement* we have also noted some misunderstanding of Thesis V concerning the proper interpretation of Romans 16: 17, 18. The thesis should be read for what it says. It should be noted that no definite exegesis of Romans 16: 17, 18 is attempted. The proposition merely says that in the view of the signers the passage does not apply to every Christian who differs with us in points of doctrine. Furthermore, it voices the conviction, if we may paraphrase the words, that the official position of the Lutheran bodies in our country who differ from the Synodical Conference is not such that Romans 16: 17, 18 can be quoted against them. It should also be noted that the elimination of Romans 16: 17, 18 from the consideration of the problem of Lutheran unity does not imply that there are not other texts which must be used when the difficult and complex questions of fellowship

are being considered. Truth is truth and error is error; and the opposition between the two must always be the continuing concern, not only of the theologian, but of every believer.

Thesis XI must also be read exactly as it stands. To ignore the relative clause and to charge the signers of the *Statement* with condoning departure from Scripture, even in non-fundamental points, is clearly a misreading of the Thesis.

One of the most important requirements for the spiritual life and health of an individual is the ability to examine himself calmly and objectively. This is even more true of church bodies and organizations. We are especially grateful to the many commentators on the *Statement* who have pointed out that its publication and its careful study by the clergy of the Missouri Synod have again demonstrated the internal strength of that body. The moral principle of self-examination, the honest measuring of our attitudes and ideas, over against the authority of the Word is, humanly speaking, one of the greatest possessions of the organized, visible Church. The loss of this duty and privilege to our clergy and laity would mean the destruction of the Missouri Synod as we have known it for a century.

It may be desirable at this point to summarize once more the great basic principles which motivated the signers of the Chicago *Statement*. These should be noted especially by those who are reading it for the first time.

1. The truth must always be spoken in love. But it must be spoken. To keep silence when consciences are disturbed and men go beyond the clear Word of God in their beliefs and attitudes is to be disloyal to the divine Word.

2. Nothing is more important for the Lutheran Church in America today than its consciousness of the full meaning of the great principle of *sola scripture*. Without that we shall be lost in the modern maze of conflicting human opinion and human judgment.

3. Differences in exegetical interpretation which are not contrary to the analogy of faith are not divisive of church fellowship. The evaluation of wrong or dangerous tendencies in the Church by a group of brethren cannot justly be considered a personal accusation against any one. In fact, only this approach to our common problems will permit *all* members of the Church to enter upon the necessary process of self-examination.

4. A constant emphasis upon the universal priesthood of believers and upon the clarity of Scripture is necessary if we are to maintain one of the great principles of the Reformation and avoid the dangers of clericalism. Our laity should be profoundly and intelligently interested in the questions raised by the *Statement*.

5. All members of the Church must constantly be on their guard against lovelessness. It is the natural tendency of the human heart and of sinful pride. The maintenance of the strength of the Church requires continuing awareness of the vital importance of love in all our relationships.

In this spirit the essays in this volume are presented to the Church at large. It is our fervent hope and prayer that by the grace of God they will help us to preserve the heritage of the Reformation.

Signed—

The Continuation Committee.

✠ In Nomine Jesu ✠



A STATEMENT



We, the undersigned, as individuals, members of Synod, conscious of our responsibilities and duties before the Lord of the Church, herewith subscribe to the following statement:

ONE

We affirm our unswerving loyalty to the great evangelical heritage of historic Lutheranism. We believe in its message and mission for this crucial hour in the time of man.

We therefore deplore any and every tendency which would limit the power of our heritage, reduce it to narrow legalism, and confine it by man-made traditions.

TWO

We affirm our faith in the great Lutheran principle of the inerrancy, certainty, and all-sufficiency of Holy Writ.

We therefore deplore a tendency in our Synod to substitute human judgments, synodical resolutions, or other sources of authority for the supreme authority of Scripture.

THREE

We affirm our conviction that the Gospel must be given free course so that it may be preached in all its truth and power to all the nations of the earth.

We therefore deplore all man-made walls and barriers and all ecclesiastical traditions which would hinder the free course of the Gospel in the world.

FOUR

We believe that the ultimate and basic motive for all our life and work must be love—love of God, love of the Word, love of the brethren, love of souls.

We affirm our conviction that the law of love must also find application to our relationship to other Lutheran bodies.

We therefore deplore a loveless attitude which is manifesting itself within Synod. This unscriptural attitude has been expressed in suspicions of brethren, in the impugning of motives, and in the condemnation of all who have expressed differing opinions concerning some of the problems confronting our Church today.

FIVE

We affirm our conviction that sound exegetical procedure is the basis for sound Lutheran theology.

We therefore deplore the fact that Romans 16:17,18 has been applied to all Christians who differ from us in certain points of doctrine. It is our conviction, based on sound exegetical and hermeneutical principles, that this text does not apply to the present situation in the Lutheran Church of America.

We furthermore deplore the misuse of First Thessalonians 5:22 in the translation "avoid every appearance of evil." This text should be used only in its true meaning, "avoid evil in every form."

SIX

We affirm the historic Lutheran position concerning the central importance of the una sancta and the local congregation. We believe that there should be a re-emphasis of the privileges and responsibilities of the local congregation also in the matter of determining questions of fellowship.

We therefore deplore the new and improper emphasis on the synodical organization as basic in our consideration of the problems of the Church. We believe that no organizational loyalty can take the place of loyalty to Christ and His Church.

SEVEN

We affirm our abiding faith in the historic Lutheran position concerning the centrality of the Atonement and the Gospel as the revelation of God's redeeming love in Christ.

We therefore deplore any tendency which reduces the warmth and power of the Gospel to a set of intellectual propositions which are to be grasped solely by the mind of man.

EIGHT

We affirm our conviction that any two or more Christians may pray together to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ if the purpose for which they meet and pray is right according to the Word of God. This obviously includes meetings of groups called for the purpose of discussing doctrinal differences.

We therefore deplore the tendency to decide the question of prayer fellowship on any other basis beyond the clear words of Scripture.

NINE

We believe that the term "unionism" should be applied only to acts in which a clear and unmistakable denial of Scriptural truth or approval of error is involved.

We therefore deplore the tendency to apply this non-Biblical term to any and every contact between Christians of different denominations.

TEN

We affirm the historic Lutheran position that no Christian has a right to take offense at anything which God has commanded in His Holy Word. The plea of offense must not be made a cover for the irresponsible expression of prejudices, traditions, customs, and usages.

We affirm our conviction that in keeping with the historic Lutheran tradition and in harmony with the Synodical resolution adopted in 1933 regarding Church fellowship, such fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church.

We affirm our conviction that our Lord has richly, singularly, and undeservedly blessed our beloved Synod during the first century of its existence in America. We pledge the efforts of our hearts and hands to the building of Synod as the second century opens and new opportunities are given us by the Lord of the Church.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

In Witness Whereof, we, the undersigned, affix our signatures this seventh day of September in the year of our Lord 1945, at Chicago, Illinois.



ACKER, LAWRENCE
 AMLING, C. M.
 ARNDT, W.
 BARTELS, H.
 BAUER, W. E.
 BEHNKE, C. A.
 BERNTHAL, AUG. F.
 BOBZIN, AUG. F.
 BRETSCHER, PAUL
 BRUENING, WM. F.
 BRUSTAT, A. W.
 CAEMMERER, RICH. R.
 COATES, THOMAS
 DEFFNER, L. H.
 ENGELBRECHT, H. H.
 FRIEDRICH, E. J.
 GEISEMAN, O. A.
 GIESELER, C. A.
 GLABE, E. B.
 GRAEBNER, THEO.
 HANSER, ARTHUR R.
 HEMMETER, BERNARD H.

HEMMETER, H. B.
 HILLMER, WM. H.
 HOFFMANN, OSWALD
 KRETZMANN, A. R.
 KRETZMANN, KARL
 KRETZMANN, O. P.
 KUECHLE, GEO.
 KUNTZ, WERNER
 KURTH, ERWIN
 KUMNICK, H. H.
 LINDEMANN, FRED H.
 LINDEMANN, HERBERT
 LOOSE, F. W.
 MEYER, ADOLF F.
 MILLER, PAUL F.
 POLACK, W. G.
 SAUER, O. A.
 SCHROEDEL, THEO. H.
 THEISS, O. H.
 WEBER, EDMUND W.
 WENCHEL, J. FREDERIC
 WIND, H. F.



I

Rev. 3:11-12a—"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

I Cor. 3:4-6—"And such trust have we through Christ to Godward; Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

THESIS I

We affirm our unswerving loyalty to the great evangelical heritage of historic Lutheranism. We believe in its message and mission for this crucial hour in the time of man.

We therefore deplore any and every tendency which would limit the power of our heritage, reduce it to narrow legalism, and confine it by man-made traditions.

The *Statement* issued in Chicago in September, 1945, is not an accusation nor a complaint so much as a call to repentance. It is the message of Schwan's thirty-two Theses of 1862 against legalism, restated in the idiom and with the specifications of 1946. It is an enlarged restatement of Prof. Theodore Graebner's paragraphs in *Homiletical Magazine* of 1919 entitled, "Wir muessen Busse tun." Not one of the signers but wishes these paragraphs to be, first of all, a confession of guilt for the share he has had in that legalism which these long years has perverted our testimony, which has had a noxious influence on our practice and which now threatens to close the doors of expansion and service to our Church in a period which should make her the light of the world. Fears, suspicions, tyrannized consciences, perversions of Scripture, the binding of souls through human interpretations,—how can a Church so afflicted with the manifestations of legalism do her work in a manner befitting her opportunities in a world stricken as never before in all the record of our race?

LEGALISM DEFINED

Legalism is the substitution of human authority, of man-made formulas, for the Word of God, and of a harsh, mechanical literalism for the free agencies of church life. Its immediate result is a strain on fraternal relations and threats of separation, its remote but certain result, a legalism in doctrine and liberalism in practice. From this will come loss of influence in leadership for the conservative, loyal element of our Church, both in clergy and laity, whom we represent.

Legalism, of course, will plague the Church so long as its members have the Old Adam. The only one who ever was free from all taint of legalism was our Lord, and let us add, His evangelists and apostles when they wrote by inspiration. We are too apt to operate with methods that go beyond the appeal to the understanding and to enlightened conscience. In the face of the ever present peril from unionism we are apt to call in for the fight on the seven demons of liberalism, the Beelzebub of separatism and legalism.

The fault which we find in our Synod is that it has never evaluated the threat of legalism as a real danger to its life and spirit. Those who have gone to excess in this respect have at least received praise for erring *on the right side* if they erred at all. The warning of Dr. F. Pieper that one extreme is as definitely setting aside the authority of Christ and His Word as the other (Theodore Graebner: *Borderland of Right and Wrong*, chapter 6) has been ignored. We have forgotten his powerful admonition not to permit man-made propositions, regulations, or formulas to usurp the place of Scripture in our teaching and practice.

PRINCIPLES IN PLACE OF SCRIPTURE

The most objectionable type of legalism is that which substitutes for the regulations of church affairs principles which have no ground in Scripture at all.

The principle that only a Christian school can train Christian character has been perverted into the formula: "Only Christian education can give character training." This absurd proposition has been defended in conferences for more than twenty years and has been made the chief argument for the anathematizing of the Boy Scouts as an anti-Christian institution. We have, accordingly, refused confirmation to Boy Scouts by conference resolutions. Men who have asserted that there *can* be character training on the basis of civil righteousness have been decried as opponents of the parochial school, yes, as errorists.

A related slogan is: "We teach the absolute separation of Church and state." This proposition is holding the floor in spite of all the testimony in our official press. And again, those who do not subscribe to this extreme position are designated as heretics, as happened in my own hearing. That neither the Scriptures nor our Confessions uphold this slogan has been discussed at wearisome length, but without result. It has proved a burden on the conscience of many a pastor whose cooperation in civic affairs was requested. It has caused our Church to be misunderstood in many areas and has closed the door to expansion. Regarding this issue (separation of Church and state) I wrote in a letter dated November 3, 1936: "The same hardening of mental processes which has resulted in a legalistic use of the antiunionistic principle has transformed the principle of separation of Church and state into something which neither the Scripture nor Luther, nor the Confessors, nor

our Missourian fathers have ever understood by that term. Evidently some of our people have never read the paragraphs in *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 536, 19; 518, 54; and 534, 11."

Then that oft repeated slogan that "with the German Language German Lutheranism must perish." It was only irritating when reported from a presidential address at one of our colleges. It was terrific when it was urged upon the conscience of pastors and congregations during World War I with the result that we lost at least 200 and possibly 500 of our parochial schools. From a letter written in 1919: "Dear friend, we must bear a great many things which we cannot make the subject of public discussion. I have at times been ready to despair of the outcome of the synodical policy on the language question, I have warned and expostulated, I have been tempted to make public protest, but have, in spite of all, maintained an impersonal, objective frame of mind in all my public expression on the matter, because in that way I am serving the cause best, after all. Under no circumstances would I cast reflections and bitter aspersions on persons of the same spiritual household, as you do in your article."

REPEATED TESTIMONY AGAINST ABUSES

In 1926, I said in a Round Table paper: "In conversation on the present status of our church a brother remarked: 'It is absurd to speak about the doctrinal unity of the Missouri Synod; we have two contradictory attitudes on the question of church fairs and bazaars!' This brother believes that a division is made in the body of Christ, when its members are not agreed on the question whether bazaars should be made a source of income to the congregation. I call this separatism."

In 1937, in another Round Table paper: "The bland assertion which to many seems simply axiomatic, a rockribbed truth, a cardinal principle of missions—'an idol-name cannot be used for God,' has cost us thousands of dollars, untold travail of soul and body, hard feelings, divisions and wounded consciences."

Extract from a letter January 8, 1936: "There is danger of a controversy on the *social Gospel* especially since we have a faction that is welcoming every opportunity to bring charges of heresy against brethren in office. Those who have been taking courses in sociology, on the other hand, are in danger of a derailment into the left ditch. All this is very clear to any candid observer."

"No lodge man can go to Communion." The principle was unknown in our church until 1904. (Synodical Conference Essay. *Proceedings of Synodical Conference*, 1904). Pastors have refused to examine rituals or inquire regarding the practices of a given order, but demanded that their people leave e.g., the Maccabees "because they are a lodge." People were excommunicated on this principle, a principle isolated from Scripture as well as from life. Whether the underlying reasons why we oppose lodgery applied in a given instance was not looked into. The principle was considered sufficient. Others went a step farther. They operated with the anti-lodge paragraph in the congregational Constitution. What a tyrannizing of conscience!

The argument used against missionary societies proceeded on the idea that there is only one missionary society, the congregation, founded by Christ Himself. On the basis of this principle all joint missionary effort of our ladies' aid societies was discouraged. Strangely enough, ladies' aid societies for colored missions in St. Louis, also for India, had the official endorsement,

while the above principle was being invoked against congregational societies. And now we have the Lutheran Women's Missionary League--Synod-wide.

WITNESSES FROM THE PAST

When the *Lutheran Witness*, in 1931, complimented a congregation on making its quota for Synod, a conference took note of the fact that this congregation had no parish school and that therefore "the entire tone and scope of said article is out of line with Synod's accepted principles." The conference asked the *Witness* to make proper explanations. From the editorial reply: "I notice a growing tendency to elevate certain time-honored attitudes to the rank of principles, and then to make these principles serve almost as tests of good Missourianism or even of Lutheranism. I look with some alarm at such a free use of the term 'Synod's accepted principles' as it occurs in your letter. I would caution against using such a line of argument whenever something has been done that displeases a brother. I would, of course, not take notice of this phrase if I had not seen some very sincere and also intelligent brethren suffer reproach because of some deduction that was made which involved him in conflict, with the 'standards of our Synod.' The more of these yokes we hang upon the brethren, the more we shall produce a reaction of liberalism and radicalism. I am as much against the 105 per cent Missourian as I am against the 95 per cent Missourian. There must be utter freedom of expression and action, all governed by the principle of love, wherever the Word of God has not spoken the decisive word."

From a letter dated March 17, 1932: "I have read again and again your letter of February 13 regarding our isolation and our difficulty of meeting the anti-Missouri propaganda in the mission fields. For this reason the legalistic and separatistic tendency in our Synod grieves me so greatly."

Letter from the Rev. F. P. Wilhelm, February 11, 1932: "Over-emphasizing any truth leads to error, both in principle and in practice. Unionism, for example, is a real danger, in our day especially; but our ceaseless and persistent ding-donging on the perils of unionism without bringing out the other side sufficiently, in the same measure and proportion in which we emphasized the one side, has developed such an unreasonable and un-Scriptural spirit of intolerance of the opinions of others, even in non-essentials, that to get back to sane Lutheranism and Missourianism as it flourished during the Waltherian period will be slow uphill work. But it will not be 'Sisyphusarbeit.' We will finally succeed in getting back to the summit from which we descended into various miasmatic valleys, and up there we will again breathe the fresh and free air of healthy Lutheranism."

LEGALISTIC USES OF SCRIPTURE

I would next submit a few examples of legalism in the use of Scripture passages. It has been asserted of the signers of this *Statement* that in obedience to 1 Tim. 5:20 (Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear), it was their duty to make a public attack upon all those whom they had in mind when composing this document. The fact that not individuals but a general tendency in our Synod caused us to meet and make known our thoughts, is brushed aside as meaningless. In other words, all the texts which bid us to correct the brethren with meekness, Gal. 6:1, in a spirit of charity, 1 Peter 4:8, forbearing one another in love, Eph. 4:2, are ignored and the principle is asserted that whenever one is known to commit a public wrong he should be exposed and rebuked *before all*. The old prin-

ciple of our Church which makes all positive commands valid *semper sed non ad semper* seems to be unknown. Where does Paul in his letters to the Corinthians correct anyone by name? What names does John mention in his letters to the seven churches? How about the thirty-two propositions published by Dr. Schwan in 1862, and reprinted in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, May, 1945? How about the articles in *Der Lutheraner* which have in recent years pointed out general dangers and tendencies? A thousand times we have complained about the lack of stewardship and missionary spirit in our congregations without mention of names. By what logic is the *Statement* to be faulted for doing the very same thing? Only a legalistic interpretation of Christianity can assert that we committed a wrong by not attacking brethren publicly and by name.

"Abstain from all appearances of evil." I Thess. 5:22. When some of our people addressed petitions and letters to the Washington authorities in political matters affecting our church (1916), we were admonished to desist because the Scripture says: "Abstain from all appearances of evil." It might look like mixing Church and state.

1 Peter 3:15 (Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear) was ruled out as justifying our negotiations with other Lutherans because this text "refers only to a duty under persecution" (1941).

Titus 3:10 (A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject) was urged as a "stern command" of God against our meeting in committee with the American Lutheran Church. The warning was added: "God is not mocked." (Dec., 1938.)

These long years we have had with us the judging of brethren because they depart from *official exegesis*. I could recite examples from the first year of my ministry (when I was listed as unsound because I held that John had some doubts of his own when he sent his disciples to Christ) until this month, when in public conference it is stated without rebuke that the interpretation of Romans 16:17ff. is a matter on which the unity of the Church depends. (Depart from Stoeckhardt and you have departed from orthodoxy.) Also this protest of ours is not new. Concerning the four points on which we granted freedom to the American Lutheran Church in 1938 it was said by the present writer on the floor of the St. Louis Convention: "Those who demand agreement where God has kept certain things from our knowledge are now under obligation to tell us just which interpretation of these obscure texts is authoritative, and when we have an authoritative interpretation, when we have made the Church the interpreter of Scripture, then we have popery, full blown, then we have the mother of all modernism and radicalism in the Church, an unscriptural, schismatic, loveless separatism." (Stenographic report.)

SOME INSTANCES OF LEGALISM

It remains now that we remind ourselves of certain instances in which the sentiment of our Church has been swayed by legalistic consideration. In 1926, I reported a great number of these in a paper delivered at a Round Table called at the behest of a layman, only synodical officials participating. I mentioned our position on life insurance, which never had merit, which led to untold hypocrisy, both among laity and clergy, and was a burden on conscience and cause of strife for several generations.

I referred at that Round Table twenty years ago to the unchristian manner in which the advance of English work was impeded and its early workers made the object of bitter attacks. The late Dr. A. L. Graebner was held to be "not quite safe," indeed "dangerously liberal," because he promoted our English work. Dr. Martin Sommer, in a review of Dr. William Dallmann's autobiography (*My Life*, St. Louis, 1945), took occasion to speak of this sad chapter in our synodical life. We know that divisions were then caused in conferences which endure to the present day.

The Society of St. James had to contend with the same kind of opposition and its leaders were tarred with the stick of Romanism. Because the Society of St. James pointed out the Calvinistic origin of the black Lutheran gown a brother writes: "If the time ever comes when 'Synod must speak' officially in this matter, then the damage will be done. Then the devil will have succeeded in creating a schism." (April 6, 1934.)

Fifteen years ago the Lutheran Laymen's League sought to aid the clergy by raising an endowment fund. I wrote to a friend in 1930: "It seems strange that organizations that are simply the product of the Gospel have such a hard time winning the good will of our clergy. I know all the leaders of the Lutheran Laymen's League, know them intimately, and I know, they are simply actuated by the spirit that wants to do something for Jesus Christ. The Gospel has the power to set people in motion. And our ministers are to a large extent lukewarm, suspicious, cold, unappreciative, blind, and many of them bitter and sarcastic." . . . I was pastoral advisor to the group and know whereof I speak.

Nor can we overlook the evil days through which the Walther League passed due to the position of pastors in many states that the League is a violation of the divinity of the call under Acts 20:28 (Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.) It was condemned as "a church within the church." For twenty years the best effort of the Synodical Board for Young People's Work was devoted to the conflicts which raged on this issue. Our memories are too short. We do not remember that one of the largest conferences of our Synod for years had a tight rule against permitting any League to be formed in their churches and by formal resolution agreed not to listen to any officer or agent of the Walther League. Regarding the legalism involved in the attempt to "synodize" the League I quote from a letter received in 1938: "These poor harrassed chumps suggest that 'Synod' or 'our District' take things in hand and 'control' the organizations for young people, men, women, etc. Forgetting that they are setting up another human authority over other people's affairs and privileges. It's the desire to do yourself what you see other people do and what you dislike to have them do; it's another manifestation of the development of bureaucracy: 'We don't want you to rule, *we* want to rule.'"

The overall picture is that of a body infested for many years with a legalistic spirit. We are face to face with a tendency that has not grown weak through toleration. What oppression of conscience . . . in the treatment of new issues and in the judging of brethren! I think our system of *Synodical elections* illustrates some of the worst excrescences. No one is unaware of the fact that every candidate whose name appears in our papers is during those evil weeks standing in the pillory. Their identity perfectly

safe, those who consider him "liberal," "unsafe," have the right to address the electoral college, and no candidate has opportunity to defend himself . . .

AGAINST BROTHERLY LOVE

We are facing a general condition. The half has not been told. Men are on record as having signed the most condemnatory resolutions attacking individuals not because they are convinced that this should be done but because a potent member of the conference insisted that "his conscience" demanded it. We have protested against these conditions many years ago. I attended four meetings (1926, 1937, 1940 and 1941) called for the purpose of healing Synodical ills . . .

In 1936 I wrote to a friend: "More important than unionism is the question whether we shall become a legalistic body in which men can be accused and attacked even behind their back without the least regard to friendship as soon as they transgress some abstract principle accepted in our Synod, without being guilty of violating any Word of God on which that principle is built. I have often referred to this process as the 'isolating of a principle.' Anything seems fair against the man who makes a gesture contrary to the traditions received among us. I despair of ever making clear to this type of Missourian the Bible concept of unionism or that of separation of Church and state. They have suffered a hardening of brain fibre on these spots."

I wrote a brother who wanted an article on bowling alleys in parish houses thus, March 14, 1934: "Knowing the legalism which has taken root in our Synod, and which ignores all adiaphora, an article like this would be considered as an official condemnation and the demand would be made that congregations conform or get out. I have seen this intolerance in action and often wish that those guilty would spend some time reading the older issues of *Der Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre* and thus recapture the original Missouri Synod attitude on these questions."

a) This maltreatment of the brother with whom we differ proceeds on the assumption that every public offense must be publicly corrected. 1 Timothy 5:20 ("Rebuke before all, that others also may fear") is quoted for this perversion of the practice of fraternal "admonition." . . . This passage is regarded as granting license to me to expose to public scorn every brother whose utterance to me appears "un-Scriptural."

b) It sets aside the Law of Love which the Savior proclaims as the highest principle of Christian conduct. No golden rule operates to prevent me from denouncing the erring brother to the entire clerical gathering and demanding that officials do their stern duty. Again, not as last but as first result, without so much as a warning to the brother, nor so much as inquiring whether the facts be truly reported and our interpretation justified, we place him in the pillory. We denounce him to the President of Synod. Not only that, but when those publicly attacked plead to be given the opportunity to settle the matter in private conference, they have been turned down with a curt, "I will not meet you"—for which we have much documentary evidence. Certainly loveless legalism can go no further in its wounding of the body of Christ to the utter confusion of the laity . . . There is need of repentance here and of a complete change of attitude.

c) There is an entire, yes, a complete and absolute ignoring of the doctrine of the *una sancta* (The One Holy Christian Church). No one out-

side of the Synodical Conference is to be regarded as a brother. In any point of difference the foregone conclusion, especially since 1938, has been that the opponent is wrong.

"WHY HAVE WE NOT BEEN TOLD"

One might ask why, in our own experiences, such grievous injuries have been borne without making reply in our official organs, when these were attacked, and without appeal to discipline. Answer: Because these offenses are merely symptomatic of a disease so wide spread that quite generally the atmosphere has been so long contaminated with these effluvia that they are mistaken for a mark of orthodoxy. Every call for repentance from President H. C. Schwan's time to our own has been largely ignored. Even our plea for a return to evangelical habits is denounced as liberalism. Brethren who fairly stew in a mess of legalism ask (and they are sincere), "Where are these conditions? Why have we not been told about them?" Our Australian brethren have more than once expressed their amazement and stern disapproval of the manner in which suspicions of the meanest kind have been uttered in print against brethren in public office. How long before they too will suspect that where there is so much smoke there must be some fire? Can we be faulted for issuing a most gentle rebuke and a sincere plea for a renewal of the spirit?

EVIL FRUIT FROM EVIL TREE

The first evil fruit which has grown from this evil tree of legalism is a certain arrogant self-sufficiency which at times marks our Synodical attitude. Sometimes we have been *untruthfully* charged with this spirit. When the *Lutheran Witness* thirty years ago raised its voice against a unionistic tendency which was so strong in some high quarters, the editors were accused, not only by many brethren, but also by our opponents as expressing a self-sufficient, loveless, pharisaical attitude. If these charges were wrong, and they certainly were, is this a reason why we should now mark all Lutherans outside our communion as heterodox? And what intolerable arrogance to express the thought recently set down in cold type, that there "might be as many true Christians in the world outside the Missouri Synod as in it!" Does not this make of us an orthodox Jehovah's Witness sect?

The second result of a legalistic attitude is the unwillingness to recognize progress toward confessionalism in the greater Lutheran bodies. By a literalistic and violent wrestling of Gal. 5:9 (A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump) a policy has been encouraged to view all other Lutheran as doomed to decay and apostasy. Dr. E. A. W. Kraus is praised for acknowledging his error in predestination and accepting the position of Dr. C. F. W. Walther. When Dr. M. Reu does the same thing he is still denounced as a modernist. It seems nothing to these brethren that Dr. F. Sprecher, the General Synod rationalist, in later years revoked his error, and that Dr. Leander S. Keyser finally confessed the *sola gratia*. It means nothing that in official magazines, in pamphlets and books, testimony is now borne against the lodge, against unionism, and for verbal inspiration. The American Lutheran Church is still charged with the doctrine of open questions which the Iowa Synod discarded more than seventy-five years ago. How can we justify such refusal to accept reality, and a most blessed reality, in the face of the future historian? Certainly the Spirit of God is grieved by such refusal to do honor to His glorious work.

The third result is a notable increase and a very general one, in bad manners toward any brother with whom we differ. Insinuation is no longer

a vice, as it is among business men, scientists and even politicians. It causes no revulsion to see the sincerity of a teacher publicly attacked and his name dragged in the gutter. Grossly insulting language is regarded as an overwrought expression of an attitude rather to be commended—a high regard for the truth. It is rare to hear such offenses reproved as violations of the law of love and as expressions of legalistic arrogance. We should do public penance for the spirit which has during the past thirty years invaded our discussions. We have not had theological controversies but caricatures of such.

THREATS TO EVANGELICAL ORGANIZATION

But the most important and most destructive effects of legalism have not yet been mentioned. One of these is the inevitable reaction which it must have in a body which is evangelical and not, like the Roman Church, legalistic in organization.

I addressed an official in November, 1935, as follows: "When I try to appraise the attitude behind certain manifestations which both you and I deplore, I must say that it constitutes a natural reaction to the intolerable, separatistic position taken by some of our conferences. I have lately seen a document or two, signed by several pastors which touch bottom in their lack of brotherly spirit, whatever the merit of their contention may be technically. The utter lack of Christian love which speaks from the documents I have mentioned, and which makes them objectionable no matter how 'correct' their position, is exactly the kind of fuel that liberalism needs in order to gain strength. So repulsive, so utterly foreign to the spirit of our Lord and to the spirit of Paul's Epistles are these demands for discipline."

Again in a letter of Nov. 3, 1936: "The issue is one larger than simply a definition of unionism or of the relation of our church to the state. The issue is rather whether we shall remain an evangelical body in our practice, especially in the relation of the clergy to one another. Where a loveless, legalistic zealotry becomes evident, it must be met with disapproval and with stern and effective counter-measures. It is time that we who truly represent the attitude of our Church, especially in questions that are morally and religiously indifferent, assert ourselves and, above all, not make the mistake of thinking that by a dignified silence we can best serve the cause of peace in the Church. We must speak up in conference and Synod against every form of legalism. For one thing, because legalism and a loveless zeal for orthodoxy is going to breed radicalism, liberalism, strife, and division."

To another friend I wrote in November, 1935: "I can see much more serious faults with old Missou'. Most of all, the legalism which has become a veritable obsession in some of our conferences. It is not only unevangelical in itself, but a *prolific feeder of liberalism*. The fundamental thesis of the Texas District Essay (*The Borderland of Right and Wrong*, 1934) has not yet been understood in those areas that needed it most. I am pleading for a return to the attitude of Walther, Sihler, Wyncken,—the founders, who would hardly be able to retain their Synodical membership in some of our conferences."

In 1930: "Any attempt to suppress freedom of open discussion of differing attitudes regarding the adiaphora is a menace to our orthodoxy, since *nothing so certainly leads to a liberal and unionistic reaction* as an undue stressing of uniformity in externals. I would urge this thought upon your attention in view of a prevailing drift in our Synod. After having spent the better part of my strength during the past twenty years in the

fight on unionism and liberalism—they were a *very real* peril—I cannot without raising a warning voice see the stand of our Synod jeopardized by repression of public utterance on matters lying in the field of externals; *the reaction will be certain.*”

In 1926, I delivered a paper at a Round Table on “Separatistic Tendencies of our Church.” Let me quote this sentence: “It is precisely because the present speaker recognizes the evil of unionism, that he pleads for a consideration of certain separatistic tendencies in our church. For *if anything prepares the soil for indifference* to the doctrines of our faith it is the tendency which would split a body of believers on questions which do not concern the unity of the body of Christ.”

In 1937, I read a paper on the theme: “When Principles Usurp the Place of Doctrine.” I expressed the same fears and misgivings in much the same terms.

A brother in high Synodical office wrote me in 1944: “The other bodies know us Missourians. But they have us down in their mental memorandum book as having first of all one characteristic, namely, ‘separatism.’ God knows we have been the conscience to many a church body in America, yet, what I want to say is that we have not been known as an outstanding positive witness but rather a negative force, partly, because we have been misunderstood and, partly, because we have erroneously held that separatism is the best testimony.”

There is a great satisfaction in knowing that our Australian brethren have never been under illusions as to this Missourian characteristic. The only testimony which has been uttered against these incredible perversions of the confessional attitude since 1938 was that of Prof. H. Hamann, which may be read in the *Australasian Theological Review*, July-September, 1940.

Finally, one of the most pernicious effects of a legalistic judging of brethren is the premium which it places on theological illiteracy. The thorough student is bound to get himself into trouble. My correspondence shows that this is a Synod-wide condition. There is a discount on research and scholarship, especially in the field of exegesis. This places a handicap on our future as an orthodox body since only Biblical scholarship will preserve unto us a conservative confessionalism. ✓

II

Rom. 15:4—"For whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

THESIS II

We affirm our faith in the great Lutheran principle of the inerrancy, certainty, and all-sufficiency of Holy Writ.

We therefore deplore a tendency in our Synod to substitute human judgments, synodical resolutions, or other sources of authority for the supreme authority of Scripture.

When the pronouncements of Synod are based upon a clear word of the Holy Scriptures, we receive them as infallible; they are divine truth. When, however, pronouncements on doctrine or practice or on casual questions are based upon interpretations of Scriptures regarding which there are divergent opinions, or on dialectic reasoning, inductions, and deductions, then we have a different proposition. These are human processes, and when the human enters in, fallibility also enters in, and neither the Synod nor anyone else may demand acceptance or obedience as we do in the case of the pronouncements based upon a clear word of Scripture. Here there is room for disagreement. Each has a right here to follow his own understanding and conscience. The extreme to which logic may lead us in an unchristian attitude is shown by the fact that it was even said by some that we ought not even to say grace at table with those Christians who are not in fellowship with us.

WHEN HUMAN JUDGMENTS INTRUDE

To what extent some theologians will use their learning and ingenuity to arrive at certain desired interpretations is evidenced in a recent tract issued against the *Statement*. In this tract the writer opposes the interpreta-

tion of Romans 16:17,18 as given in the *Statement*. It goes against his Christian feelings, however, to say of American Lutherans that they do "not serve Christ" and are "belly servers" in the gross way that the Apostle speaks of those who teach contrary to the doctrine that they have learned. He begins to distort the text and declares that when these other Lutherans or other Christians teach other doctrines, to that extent they do not serve Christ. You cannot, however, put a man into opposite categories. He is either serving Christ or he is not. Paul's words imply that they are entirely in the former category; he says very emphatically they do not serve Christ. In his effort to get away from the harsh charge that they serve their own bellies, the aforementioned writer displays even greater theological ingenuity. Paul here uses the Greek word, *koilia*, which always means the physical belly. The writer seeks to show that Paul is using a figure of speech. As proof that the word is used figuratively he quotes the words of Christ referring to believers, declaring "out of whose belly shall flow streams of living water." Even here the word *koilia* means the physical belly, for the passage itself is used figuratively. The writer seems to have forgotten Paul's use of the word *koilia* in a very familiar Philippian saying: "Whose God is their belly, who mind earthly things." The writer's purpose by this ingenious interpretation is to make this hard word to mean, "who teach notions of their own evil heart." We showed this passage to an intelligent, well indoctrinated young woman from St. Louis and asked her to whom she thought those words applied: "They serve not Christ but their own bellies." After reading it a second time she said, "To unbelievers, to persons who are not Christians." When we asked her, "Do you think they could apply to American Lutherans?," she was rather shocked at the idea.

CONTRARY TO SPIRIT OF GOSPEL

There has been a growing tendency in our Synod of passing enactments and resolutions by which we would regulate the conduct of pastors and congregations, especially in matters of practice and casuistry, thus taking away the evangelical character of our Synod and creating a spirit of legalism. It is a thing that has come over us gradually and very subtly and may not be recognized if we only take a superficial view. I shall call attention to a few enactments and procedures which to our mind are legalistic in character and destructive of the evangelical spirit of the Lutheran Church and ministry.

During World War I, the question whether our camp pastors and chaplains should be permitted to commune the members of other Lutheran Synods was debated at length. The Army and Navy Commission decided against it. The Eastern sub-board was very much in favor of it. Several meetings were held about the matter. A large meeting was held in New York City at which the president of Synod and also a vice-president and members of the Board and the New York pastors were present. The vice-president almost with tears in his eyes, appealed to us by the love of Christ not to commune other Lutherans. Others, however, protested vigorously against that kind of appeal, declaring that those who advocated communing others, had just as much love for Christ as he. We wanted to determine the Christian procedure solely on the basis of God's Word. There were meetings with representatives of other Lutheran bodies. At a meeting in Chicago, Dr. Knubel, the president of the United Lutheran Church at that time, turned to a member of the Board and said, "Pastor, if I were sick unto death in a hospital and you were the only Lutheran minister there, you would commune me, would you not?" He received the answer "No." He shook his head at the answer.

Despite the decision of the Board, some of us did commune other Lutherans. One Sunday morning during that war a young soldier came to the altar and received the Sacrament. He had not announced. At the door he thanked me, telling me that he was going overseas, that the authorities did not want to let him leave the camp. It was against army regulations, but because he had made such a "fuss," the captain finally let him go. What if I had not communed him!

How much harm has been done by the extreme position some took in the last war only eternity will reveal. The following story from the war illustrates the harm that may be done. Three Lutheran soldiers in a camp in a middle western state, where a Missouri Synod church was the only Lutheran church, came to the altar to receive the blessed Sacrament. The pastor asked them if they were Lutherans. They told him they were. Then he asked them if they were Missouri Lutherans. When they told him "No," he replied, "I am sorry that I cannot give you communion." At the door they had a violent dispute and almost came to blows. . . .

THE SCRIPTURES OR THE SYNOD

The final piece of legalism to which I would call attention is what occurred at the Saginaw convention. I refer to the adoption of the resolution permitting joint prayer at intersynodical meetings provided the purpose is to discuss doctrinal differences. Reams of paper had been used up officially and unofficially in condemning intersynodical prayers as a form of unionism. Yet this resolution was adopted without a dissenting vote. I could hardly believe my ears. Even the laity was surprised. I heard one of them say, "We have hitherto been taught it is against the Scriptures, and now Synod approves it. What makes a thing right, the Scriptures or the Synod?" By what infallible authority the convention had the right to limit prayer with others to this one instance is beyond me. Tomorrow it may make another exception to the confusion of members' minds and consciences. The whole procedure is legalistic. The evangelical procedure would have been to have declared that we do not as a rule have prayers with others, but that there may be occasions when, without compromising our faith, we may find it the Christian thing to do. When this should be done must be left to the judgment and conscience of the individual pastor. If he abuses the evangelical principle of joint prayer and carries it too far, we must deal with him for the abuse. Again we must not sacrifice the evangelical principle in order to prevent the abuse.

It appears from these examples of unevangelical legalistic procedure in these instances that Synod is more or less taking on not only the function of the ancient Church Council but, to some extent, also its infallible authority. Its enactments are looked upon as having binding character on the conduct and consciences of pastors and congregations. Those who gainsay them are under suspicion and even looked upon as heretics. I am sure none of us will want this tendency to go on, and that all of us want to retain the evangelical character of our great body. It is a tendency which in the course of time has shown itself in larger bodies like ours as history teaches.

III

I Cor. 9:16—"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

THESIS III

We affirm our conviction that the Gospel must be given free course so that it may be preached in all its truth and power to all the nations of the earth.

We therefore deplore all man-made walls and barriers and all ecclesiastical traditions which would hinder the free course of the Gospel in the world.

"Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, unto Thy Church Thy Holy Spirit and the wisdom which cometh down from above, that Thy Word, as becometh it, may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people . . ."

This ancient collect of the Church is based on 2 Thess. 3:1, 2: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith." And how highly this collect is regarded by the Church is seen from the fact that by the rubrics of our *Lutheran Hymnal* (p. 14), it is assigned as one of the two collects to be used every Sunday just before the Benediction. This collect was no doubt in the consciousness (or subconsciousness) of the framers of Thesis III of the *Statement*.

Here the Word of God is evidently thought of as a refreshing stream that waters the earth and makes it bring forth and bud. Every child of God who has experienced the wonderful life-giving effect of the Word of God cannot but have the conviction and earnest desire that this Word of the Lord should be given free course, and a child of God must deplore all

man-made walls and barriers and all ecclesiastical traditions which would hinder the free course of the Gospel in the world.

FOR THE FREE COURSE OF THE GOSPEL

Christians are always mindful of the Lord's description of them: "Ye are the light of the world, the salt of the earth; ye shall be witnesses unto Me." They are conscious of the commands "Preach the Gospel"; "Be instant in season, out of season"; "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you the reason of the hope that is in you with all meekness and fear (reverence)". That is the one purpose of the Christian life on earth—to show forth the praises of the Lord.

But is it not true that we so often look for reasons to squirm out of an opportunity where we might testify for Christ, because we are afraid to offend some timid soul who thinks that it might be wrong to bear such testimony in a strange place, e.g. at commencements, civic celebrations, etc.? So often the fear that we might give offense, or an inferiority complex, propels us in the direction of the least resistance, when we should speak the Word boldly and give the Gospel free course, leaving the outcome to the Lord.

There were undoubtedly in St. Paul's day "wicked men," such as attempted to hinder the free course of the Gospel by persecution, by belittling, criticising, and slandering the messengers of the truth; or "unreasonable men," such as unwittingly and without malice or evil intent threw obstacles in the path of the Gospel and its heralds. That is why the apostle calls upon the Thessalonians to pray for him and his associates.

That condition has repeated itself in the course of the Church's history. And we signers of the *Statement* in all meekness and reverence submit that such a condition may obtain even in our day in a Church such as ours which God has so richly blessed during the past hundred years. In fact, the very richness of the blessing poured out upon us by a gracious God must lead us to examine ourselves if we still possess the fulness of that blessing, or if, perhaps, we have reached the Laodicean stage: "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," possibly not even of self-examination.

THE SPIRIT OF THE FATHERS

There is no doubt that our fathers were anxious to give the Gospel free course in their day. A century ago, on the occasion of the tercentenary of Luther's death, Dr. C. F. W. Walther said in a memorial sermon: "Let us be zealous in communicating the treasure of the pure doctrine, which God has given to us, also to others; let us therefore confess our faith with as much love and humility as sincerity and zeal; confess it, however, not only in words but also in deeds" (*Lutheraner*, 1946, p. 36). But he also added in that same sermon: "Finally, let us not give room to the spirit of separatism, but over the tomb of our dear father in Christ, the sainted Luther, give the hand of brotherhood to, and unite also publicly before the world with, all those who, for the joint prosecution of the work of the Lord, will remain with us in the old doctrine and Church, and contend with us for these treasures. If at this tercentenary the foundations were laid for all this, the blessing would surely be great, yea, immeasurable and eternal" (*Lutheraner*, 1946, p. 36).

Less than three weeks later, Dr. Walther wrote to his friend, the Rev. Theo. Brohm: "I must confess to you that I have lost all fear, on account

of the dead orthodoxists, of keeping in mind the 'Quilibot *praesumitur bonus*' (giving the benefit of the doubt) in future in the *Lutheraner*. Let foolish zealots, proud, carnal watchmen of Zion, think that I am capitulating to the misbelievers (heterodox—*Falschgläubigen*); I cannot allow myself to be kept from dealing gently with the young man Absalom. One must keep well in mind how little opportunity most of the so-called Lutheran preachers here have had to become acquainted with the true doctrine and its history; if we throw them away immediately, we will close the door to their hearts altogether; but if they see that we do not at once suspect them of hardness of heart, they will be the more ready to listen. America is evidently a field where many a plant can still thrive if it is carefully nurtured. I hate that sectarian separatism and exclusiveness (*das sektirerische Abschliessen und Sicheinschliessen*) of the Grabau-minded. Our guileless advances (*Entgegenkommen*) have, I hope to God, produced more and better results than all the lightning and thunder which foolish zealots wish us to use." (*Walthers Briefe*, I, p. 21).

Similar sentiments are expressed in a letter to the Rev. W. Sihler of Jan. 2, 1845: "God knows that even under Stephan we had nothing else in mind than to prove our most perfect loyalty to the true Lutheran Church; but nothing caused us to fail in this very thing more than our stubborn exclusiveness. The more dangerous and pernicious this has become to us, the more we now long for the preservation of catholicity and the avoidance of every kind of separatism." (*Walthers Briefe*, I, p. 6).

A CENTURY AGO

The sentiments uttered here by Walther were incorporated into the draft for an Evangelical Lutheran synodical constitution in 1846 and into the constitution itself in Chicago, in 1847. In chapter I, "Reasons for Forming a Synodical Organization," par. 2, there is mentioned not only "the preservation and furthering of the unity of the pure confession, Eph. 4: 3-6," but also "to provide a common defense against separatism and sectarianism." Here is quoted Romans 16:17, not against erring *brethren*, but against those who have separated themselves from the true Church and have become sects.

And while in the constitution the "joining" is conditioned upon the acceptance of the Scriptures as the Word of God and all the Confessions of the Lutheran Church as the pure and unadulterated explanation and presentation of the Word of God, Walther, a decade later, was willing to enter into free conference with *all* Lutherans who accepted without reservation the Augsburg Confession only. Was he receding from his former position? Not at all. We must remember that that was the day when the only general body of Lutherans in the United States was being importuned to adopt the "Definite Platform", which purported to be an "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession." Walther and his associates were satisfied therefore for the time being to get their friends together on the basis of that common Lutheran Confession, which in their opinion was fundamental, and using that as a springboard to bring them to a full understanding and acceptance of the other Symbolical Books. It is due to the work begun a century ago by the confessional group in the Lutheran Church here in America that soon no man in America could call himself a Lutheran unless he without reservation accepted and confessed Luther's Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession.

And now the great aim of Walther, the restoration of the Confessions to the Church, is all but reached. Nine-tenths of the Lutherans in America have done what Walther and the Missourians did a hundred years ago. They have taken the entire Book of Concord as their confessional basis. A stupendous task, magnificently performed!

But, in the mind of Walther, the restoration of the Confessions to the Church *was not an end in itself*. It was only the first necessary step toward the great goal he had set for himself and his co-workers, the final realization of one faithful Lutheran Church in America. The General Council in 1867, the Synodical Conference in 1872, the General Synod in 1913, the United Lutheran Church in America in 1918, the American Lutheran Church in 1930, all accepted the Book of Concord. And yet *outwardly* Lutheranism in America is in a state of schism, which some call a hopeless division. The saddest part of all is that so many accept this schismatic situation as if it were the appointed order of things; they look upon it as our normal state of being. They are suspicious of every effort to correct it. Their constant practice is to seek causes to justify and emphasize division, to stigmatize honest and laborious efforts to remove the causes of division and to come to an understanding on the basis of the Scripture and the Confessions as "a denial of the truth," and joint prayer for the Spirit's blessing upon such efforts as hypocrisy. We solemnly discuss the dangers of unionism, which are real, and never say a word about the dangers of separatism, which are just as real. What an impetus would be given to the course of the Gospel if all those who stand on the foundation of the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church would jointly raise their voices in the unity of the Spirit, instead of erecting barriers and building walls to hinder the free course!

BLOCKING THE COURSE OF THE GOSPEL

We have become guilty of erecting obstacles to the free course of the Gospel in such numbers that *we can mention only a few*.

The *language* may in some instances have been such an obstacle. Our fathers realized their responsibility in letting the Gospel have free course also among their fellow-Americans of English tongue. Pastor Theo. Brohm preached in English on November 3, 1843, in Altenburg, Perry County, Missouri, to his fellow-Americans. Dr. Walther, in his anxiety to provide the younger generation of his Saxons and their "American" friends with the Gospel, even had Dr. S. L. Harkey of the General Synod come to St. Louis in 1859 and preach to them in English (*Lutheran Observer*, quoted in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, Vol. XVII, p. 91; *Denkstein*, p. 185). During the convention of our Synod in Fort Wayne in 1857 and again in 1863 some of our pastors preached in English churches, as reported in the proceedings of Synod (1857, p. 69; 1860, p. 103). But we cannot deny that there was a time when the German language was overemphasized and the establishment of English Lutheran churches was strenuously opposed. During World War I, hundreds of our parish schools were closed because the teaching of German could no longer be urged for their existence. By and large, it took a world war to jar our churches into the necessity of introducing English services and our Synod into dropping the "German" from its name.—And now the pendulum has swung almost to the other extreme: Some of our metropolitan churches are hardly alive to the necessity of letting the Gospel have free course also through the medium of the German and other languages.

"ALWAYS OUR POSITION"

Our proposition speaks of *ecclesiastical traditions*. These appear to be easily made, and often they are entirely at variance with actual history and do not in any way justify the ancient slogan, "*So haben wir doch immer gestanden!*" When in 1944, in Saginaw, the committee bringing in recommendations regarding Lutheran Union advocated *joint prayer at intersynodical meetings* (however, giving any brother the right to prevent such a prayer on the plea that his conscience had been violated or that he had taken offense, *Proceedings* 1944, p. 252), a learned doctor rose to explain that such a prayer must always be regarded as an exception and that Synod was by no means giving up its old (sic) position on joint prayer at intersynodical meetings. When asked to mention a single instance when our fathers had objected to such prayers before 1904, he was unable to do so, saying, "I thought that was always our position."

THE BARRIER OF LEGALISM

Another obstacle in the way of the Gospel is the legalistic treatment of the *lodge question*. There is to our knowledge not a single Lutheran body in America that does not recognize the secret anti-Christian lodge as an unmitigated evil. But it remained for the Missouri Synod in 1929 to pass resolutions, "to attain uniformity," in order "to secure uniformity in our congregational practice" (*Proceedings* 1944, pp. 114, 115) and to threaten refusal of Christian fellowship to congregations that would not purge themselves eventually of the lodge evil; instead of taking the course recommended by Dr. F. Pieper in 1899 (*Proceedings*, pp. 36, 37) of trying to save the souls even of lodgemen by "exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine," not for the sake of uniformity, but for the sake of souls. That is the hard way of solving the lodge problem; and conscientious pastors who sit late into the night trying to gain lodge-entangled Christians do not always win; but they have a better conscience than those who would tell such people, "I am sorry, but a resolution of my Synod forbids me to admit you to Holy Communion," and think that they have done their full duty by a blood-bought soul.

A high official of Synod exclaimed, when the lodge resolutions of 1929 were passed, "Now we've got them—the fellows who condone the lodges!" Whereupon he was told by a plain village pastor; "Brother, you haven't got me yet. I am going to continue, by the grace of God, to look upon every soul, even one that is entangled in the lodge, as a prize purchased with the blood of Christ, and worth trying to save for heaven."

THE OBSTACLE OF UNJUST CRITICISM

One of our brethren accused some members of the "Missouri Synod colloquents (he meant the Committee on Doctrinal Unity) to the Synodical Conference (*Proceedings* 1944, p. 105), saying, "that they, absolutely unauthorized and besides senseless (or very cunning), took rushing steps to arrange for numerous and widely spread mixed conferences; they invited men even of the United Lutheran Church. This aroused serious misgiving among all good and sound Missourians; among other things it elicited a strong protest from District President . . ." The same brother referred to an intersynodical conference, which had been opened with a prayer for God's guidance and where God's blessing had been asked upon a joint meal, as "a concrete case of undue fraternization." "Common prayer in such a crowd

is rank hypocrisy from both sides and from Missourians plain denial of their otherwise confessed faith." Dr. Graebner was included among those who engaged in "unionistic activities," simply because he gave what in the opinion of the writer was "a too optimistic report on the union movement and an undue invitation to join in it."

Now we know very well that according to the law of averages we must have such men even in the Missouri Synod. But that such drivel (*sit venia verbo*) should be printed in the report of the Synodical Conference, especially when this Conference resolved, "That this memorial should be returned to the writer with the suggestion, that if he must uphold it, he direct it to the proper authorities," is not conducive to the free course of the Gospel.

WE HAVE ERRED

We submit with all meekness and reverence that in the course of our history we have made mistakes and more than once missed glorious opportunities. It is undoubtedly true what the sainted Dr. Gerberding said in 1912: "The Lord must love the Lutheran Church in America, or else she would never have so well survived her many mistakes." "We poor sinners do beseech Thee . . . to put an end to all schisms and causes for offense!"

IV

St. John 13:34-35—"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Phil. 1:9—"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."

THESIS IV

We believe that the ultimate and basic motive for all our life and work must be love—love of God, love of the Word, love of the brethren, love of souls.

We affirm our conviction that the law of love must also find application to our relationship to other Lutheran bodies.

We therefore deplore a loveless attitude which is manifesting itself within Synod. This unscriptural attitude has been expressed in suspicions of brethren, in the impugning of motives, and in the condemnation of all who have expressed differing opinions concerning some of the problems confronting our Church today.

In this thesis, the signers of the *Statement* stress the pre-eminence of love in the Christian's life and work. It should not be necessary to call the attention of Christians to this important teaching of Holy Writ. It is a fact, however, that all Christians need frequently to be reminded of the truth that surpassing all other virtues is the one known as Christian love. The Greek word *agape* is used more than eighty times in the New Testament, and the verb *agapao* occurs more than 115 times. The New Testament uses many other terms to convey the important truth that Christians should practice love.

WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS OF LOVE

May I call attention to a few important passages. In John 14:22,23, we read, "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot: Lord, how is it that thou wilt

manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him: If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him." In Matt. 22: 36-40, we read: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." In Rom. 13: 8-10, Paul exhorts the Christians: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Other significant passages which we all well know are: 1 Cor. 13:13: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Gal. 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is *love*, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." John 13:34,35: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Eph. 5:2: "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." The *Statement* fails to make explicit mention of love of one's enemies, but this is obvious from other passages of Scripture. In Matt. 5:44, the Savior binds it on the conscience of His disciples: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute you." Other important passages in which the sacred writers stress the necessity and nature of Christian love are: Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:22; Eph. 4:15. 31,32; 6:24.

THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW

Christians practice love toward one another because they believe in a common Savior. The Christian sees in his Christian brother a reflection of God's image. The Savior makes love the fundamental law of the new covenant (John 13:34). Paul describes this virtue in all its peculiar beauty in 1 Cor. 13. John, in particular, says that this love should be demonstrated in works of love and that a Christian must for the sake of love be ready even to give up his life for the Christian brother (1 John 3:16). We remember what a profound impression the early Christians made on the Gentiles because they practiced Christian love. True brotherly love has a tender regard for the weaker brother. It rather abstains from the use of something otherwise permitted, than by the use of it to give offense to a weak brother and cause him to stumble (1 Cor. 8:9). True brotherly love must be achieved over and over again by constant battle with innate selfishness. Besides, the brethren whom we are to love sometimes have but little that is really attractive to us. It requires a strong faith to love even one's enemies.

"LOVING FOR THE LOVE OF HIM"

According to 1 John 5:1, Christian faith includes both love of God and love of the brethren. It cannot be otherwise. Those who love God must necessarily love also those who bear God's image (James 3:9). Love of God

without love of the brethren is self-deception and a lie (1 John 4:20). He who believes in God and loves Him will avoid, oppose, and even hate people insofar as they are enemies of God (Ps. 139: 21,22). But since he is also aware that these people have been created in God's image, that they are lost without Christ, that Christ has redeemed them, and that it is the Father's will that they should become God's children, he is constrained to include also them in his love. How could he truly love God if he were to exclude from his love those whom the love of God embraces? This explains why the love of God that is born of faith must even include the love of one's enemies. Such a love is possible once the Christian's love for his neighbor is not determined by motives of natural sympathy or antipathy, but by the love which God's redeeming love in Christ has poured into the Christian's heart.

DOES LOVELESSNESS EXIST?

The antithesis does not direct itself against Synod as a whole. It "deplores a loveless attitude which is manifesting itself *within Synod*." It does not accuse officers of Synod. It accuses no one. Nor does the antithesis say that the law of love is not applied at all within Synod. If the antithesis had thus expressed itself, it would have denied *de facto* that there are Christians in Synod.

The antithesis is directed against a loveless attitude within Synod as this, in the opinion of the signers, "has been expressed in suspicions of brethren, in the impugning of motives, and in the condemnation of all who have expressed differing opinions concerning some of the problems confronting our Church today." The antithesis therefore asserts that the law of love is sometimes not applied within Synod in some of its aspects and in some relationships. What are the problems referred to in the antithesis? They are such problems as the relation of our Synod, at the present time, to other Lutheran groups in the country, and the matters referred to in Theses Five to Nine of the *Statement*.

Is the antithesis true? Do its observations reflect facts? Here there may be a difference of opinion. We, the signers, believe that it is true and that it does state facts. We believe also that we need not to be surprised that there might be "a loveless attitude within Synod." When the Savior speaks of signs preceding the last times, He says: "The love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12).

THE APOLOGY AND THE STATEMENT

Just how serious a matter it is when Christians fail to practice the law of love, the *Apology* brings to our attention in the words: "For just as in all families and in all states concord should be nourished by mutual offices and tranquility cannot be retained unless men overlook and forgive certain mistakes among themselves; so Paul commands that there should be love in the Church in order that it may preserve concord, bear with the harsher manners of brethren as there is need, overlook certain less serious mistakes, lest the Church fly apart into various schisms and enmities and factions and heresies arise from the schisms." (*Concordia Triglotta* 185). Another passage in the *Apology* which we need to remember is the following: "And many heresies have arisen in the Church only from the hatred of the teachers. Therefore it does not refer to a person's faults, but to the faults of others, when it says: Charity covereth sins (Prov. 10:12), namely, those of others, and that, too, among men, i. e., even though these offenses

occur, yet love overlooks them, forgives, yields, and does not carry all things to the extremity of justice." (*Concordia Triglotta* 187).

The signers of the *Statement* are not sitting in judgment over any one in Synod. We realize that we who have issued the *Statement* have often become guilty ourselves of loveless attitudes. We, too, must repent of this sin on bended knees before God. And yet, the love of God, the love of the Savior, the love for our brethren, and our interest in the Kingdom compelled us in this antithesis to call our Church's attention to what we believe is a grave sin in our Church and to plead with the brethren with God's help to do all within their power to remove this evil.

V

Eph. 4:12-15—"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

THESIS V

We affirm our conviction that sound exegetical procedure is the basis for sound Lutheran theology.

We therefore deplore the fact that Romans 16:17,18 has been applied to all Christians who differ from us in certain points of doctrine. It is our conviction, based on sound exegetical and hermeneutical principles, that this text does not apply to the present situation in the Lutheran Church of America.

We furthermore deplore the misuse of First Thessalonians 5:22 in the translation "avoid every appearance of evil." This text should be used only in its true meaning, "avoid evil in every form."

The principle enunciated in this thesis is fundamental in any true Lutheran body, where the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are the rule of faith and of life. Luther's conviction that behind every word of the Hebrew and Greek text of the Scriptures stood the majesty of God impelled him to seek out and proclaim the full revelation of God in those Scriptures, and at the same time to deny emphatically that one must or may read between the lines in order to add to that revelation.

We may also assume that the Apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit, whose instrument he was, fully expected the contents of a letter, like that to the Romans, to be intelligible to the people of his time; and that in the ordinary sense of words and phrases as they had come to know them from everyday experience in the church and the world about them.

Given a knowledge of the language, therefore, and an acquaintance with the circumstances surrounding its composition, we, too, ought to be able to understand that same letter, in whole or in part, without dissecting the text or employing fancy tricks of interpretation.

Dr. L. Fuerbringer's rules of hermeneutics have constantly emphasized this intelligent and common sense approach to the Scriptures, particularly that sound rule which furnishes the basis for all the rest: "*Der buchstäbliche Sinn (sensus literae) ist überall auch als der intendierte Sinn (sensus literalis) festzuhalten, wo nicht irgendwelche Gründe zur Annahme eines Tropus nötigen.*" (L. F. Fuerbringer, *Hermeneutik*, par. 23).

We must regret that the language employed by the original writer is often imperfectly understood today because of the restricted body of literature which has come down to us and because of the fact that exact circumstances prompting the writing of individual sections, or even of an entire work, have been beclouded by the passing years. It is no idle prayer of the true Bible student, therefore, that the Holy Spirit will lead him into all truth as he employs the means at hand, his primary principle, *Scriptura, Scripturam interpretatur*, and his secondary consideration the gathering of every scrap of information from linguistics and history to cast light on the original intention of the author when writing the passage in question.

THE CONTEXT

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

Romans 16:17.18 comes as a striking surprise in the midst of greetings from Paul to Prisca and Aquila, Epaenetus, Marian, Andronicus and Junia, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles and about a dozen more. "Greet each other with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you." (v. 16.)

Our passage breaks into this train of thought with startling abruptness. Lietzmann (*Einführung in die Textgeschichte der Paulus Briefe*, p. 126) imagines that Paul, aroused by the thought that all the churches he has founded are threatened by the disturbers described, seized the pen from Tertius and penned these burning words with his own hand. Others find in these two verses little to disturb the even tenor and impersonal character of the whole letter except a strong warning against an evil not presently pressing but likely or even bound to come. Since the problem is not immediate, say these interpreters, Paul is not unduly concerned about it. Lenski, on the other hand, pictures the two verses as the culmination of the whole epistle.

Examination of the context leads us to no definite conclusion regarding the question: how insistent was Paul upon the immediacy of the problem to be encountered?

v. 17 τοὺς ποιῶντας would indicate that some of the men who had been dogging Paul's steps through Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece, (supposing that they are referred to) had already put in their appearance. vv 20.21, on the other hand, indicate that the Roman congregation, having received Paul's own explicit identification of the schismatics, will recognize them at once for what they are and will not allow itself to be troubled by them. Indeed, "the God of peace will speedily crush Satan under their feet." (v. 20.)

TEXT

παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, σκοπεῖν τοὺς τὰς διχοστασίας καὶ τὰ σκάνδαλα παρὰ τὴν διδασχὴν ἣν ὑμεῖς ἐμάθετε ποιῶντας, καὶ ἐκκλίνετε ἀπ' αὐτῶν· οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Χριστῷ οὐ δουλεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τῇ ἑαυτῶν κοιλίᾳ, καὶ διὰ τῆς χρηστολογίας καὶ εὐλογίας ἐξαπατῶσιν τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἀνάκων.

Nestle's text of this passage is well established. Although there is good ancient authority for the aorist imperative, ἐκκλίνατε, we follow the reading of the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus.

διχοστασία

I Cor. 3,3. (Appears as a gloss among the activities of those who are "fleshly") ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοὶ ἐστε. ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις, ** οὐχὶ σαρκικοὶ ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε; ** καὶ διχοστασιαὶ - - D G pm itsy Textus Receptus Ir

Gal. 5,20 (listed among the works of the flesh)
φανερὰ δὲ ἐστὶν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός, ἃτινὰ ἐστὶν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσελγεία, εἰδωλολατρεία, φαρμακεία, ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι, καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις.

σκάνδαλον

Examination of all the passages in which the holy writers employ τὸ σκάνδαλον or its verb, σκανδαλίζω, will reveal immediately the serious view which all of them, following Christ's example, take of the character and consequences of "offense."

Matt. 18,7.

Οὐαὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν σκανδάλων· ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἔλθειν τὰ σκάνδαλα, πλὴν οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δι' οὗ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται

Luke 17,1

Ἐλεν δὲ πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ· ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστιν τοῦ τὰ σκάνδαλα μὴ ἔλθειν, οὐαὶ δὲ δι' οὗ ἔρχεται.

ἐκκλίνω

Rom. 3,12

πάντες ἐξέκλιναν

I Pet. 3,11

ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν

The latter passage evidently demands of ἐκκλίνω an exclusive sense, "avoid." (Not "stay away as much as you can.")

Matt. 12,40 (A strong distinction between κοιλία and καρδιά)

ὥσπερ γὰρ ἦν Ἰωάννης ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας, οὕτως ἔσται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας

Matt. 15, 17,18 (In the words of Christ, a sharp distinction between κοιλία and καρδιά)

οὐ νοεῖτε ὅτι πᾶν τὸ εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς τὸ στόμα εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν χωρεῖ καὶ εἰς ἀφαιρῶνα ἐκβάλλεται; τὰ δὲ ἐκπορευόμενα ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ἐκ τῆς καρδίας ἐξέρχεται, κακὰ πάντα τοῖν ἀνθρώπων.

Mark 7, 18-20

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀσυνετοὶ ἔστε; οὐ νοεῖτε ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐξῶθεν εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς τὸν ἀνθρώπον οὐ δύναται αὐτὸν κοινῶσαι, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσπορεύεται αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν καρδίαν ἀλλ' εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν, καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀφαιρῶνα ἐκπορεύεται, καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα; Ἐλεγεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκπορευόμενον, ἐκεῖνο κοινὸν τὸν ἀνθρώπον.

Luke 15,16 (belly means belly)

καὶ ἐπεθύμει γεμίσαι τὴν κοιλίαν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν κερατίων ὧν ἡσθιον οἱ χοῖροι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδίδου αὐτῷ.

John 7,38

εἰάν τις διψᾷ, ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ρεύουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος.

In this passage κοιλία is used as the equivalent for Hebrew which normally means belly or womb, and is used metaphorically on certain occasions for the innermost feelings of a man. Transfer of denotation as well as connotation from one language to another is a precarious business in any case. Since this is the only passage where κοιλία could possibly be etherealized, we understand it here, too, in its usual sense: belly.

I Cor. 6,13 (Paul assumed that belly meant belly)

τὰ βρώματα τῇ κοιλίᾳ, καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν· ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει. τὸ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῇ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι.

Phil. 3, 18,19. (Enemies of the cross of Christ)

πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὕς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία καὶ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονούντες.

Rev. 10, 9,10.

καὶ ἀπῆλθα πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον, λέγων αὐτῷ δοῦναι μοι τὸ βιβλαρίδιον. καὶ λέγει μοι· λάβε καὶ κατάφαγε αὐτό, καὶ πικρανεῖ σου τὴν κοιλίαν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ στόματί σου ἔσται γλυκὺ ὡς μέλι. καὶ ἔλαβον τὸ βιβλαρίδιον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου καὶ κατέφαγον αὐτό, καὶ

ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματί μου ὡς μέλι γλυκύ· καὶ ὅτε ἔφαγον αὐτό, ἐπιζοῶν-
θη ἡ κοιλία μου.

Liddel and Scott (new edition) gives no evidence of transfer of mean-
ing to the emotions in the expression: δουλεύειν τῇ ἑαυτῶν κοιλίᾳ,
Rom. 16,17 (which L. & S. refers to "gluttons.")

G. Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch* (Vol. III p. 738) understands the
Romans passage in the sense of the "base appetites," although its normal
meaning, *nach verbreiteter griechischer Weise*, would be "gluttony, sexual
appetite."

χρηστολογία

ἅπαξ λεγόμενον in Greek literature.

Some clue as to the meaning of the word may be discovered in the following:
Jul. Capitol. *Pertinax* 13:

Omnēs qui libere fabulas conferebant, male Pertinaci loquebantur,
χρηστόλογον cum appellantes, qui bene loqueretur et male faceret.
(calling him Chrestologus because, as they said, with pleasant speech
he covered up his wicked deeds.)

Pallad. Alexandr. epigr. 101:

μισῶ τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν διπλοῦν πεφυκότα—χρηστὸν λόγοισι, πολέμιον
δὲ τοῖς τρόποις.

(I hate the two-faced man—pleasant in his speech, belligerent in his
character.)

χρηστολογία very likely means speech pleasant and fair, in striking con-
trast to the belligerent conduct belying that speech.

εὐλογία — The ordinary meaning is "eulogy"—"flattery."

Some have understood it in the philosophical sense—"*Schönrederei*."
Evidently one copyist wanted to understand it that way and changed it to
εὐγλωττία (Cod. 109 or 406). There is a parallel in classical literature for
εὐλογία in that sense—cp. Plato, Republic III 400 D. Let us understand it,
however, in its normal sense, flattery with consequent plausibility, the latter
based on Cicero's remark, "habet εὐλογίαν" (Cic. Ad Att. XIII 22, 4.)

There is little that is unusual about the form in which Paul has expressed
the thought of these two verses, unless it be the great expression enclosed by
the words τοὺς ποιοῦντας, which Robertson calls a "neat classic idiom."
(Robertson, Grammar p. 758.)

σοκοπεῖν is an infinitive dependent upon παρακαλῶ. Parallelism would
have required that ἐκκλίνετε be an infinitive, too, or σοκοπεῖν an imperative.
Someone, evidently, felt this and changed the text to σοκοπεῖτε (D.G. it.).
Paul, apparently, was not concerned about parallelism.

THE ARTICLES

τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὰς διχοστασίας τὰ σκάνδαλα τὴν διδαχὴν

The four articles stand like roadmarkers before each of these four
words.

At first glance the King James translation—"mark them which cause

divisions and offenses contrary to the teaching"—might appear to be a general pronouncement against false teachers of any description.

The Greek definite article, however, can never be ignored, certainly not here. "Whenever the Greek article occurs, its object certainly is definite," says Robertson (op. cit. p. 756.)

Bernhard Weiss: "Hier sind es die, welche die den Lesern bekannten (Bem. den Art.), damals so vielerwärts in Paulinischen Gemeinden erregten und leicht auch die Leser bedrohenden antipaulinischen Spaltungen . . . herbeiführen." (Bernard Weiss, Der Brief an die Römer, p. 603.)

Theodor Zahn translates this passage: "Ich ermahne euch aber, ihr Brüder, ein wachsames Auge zu haben auf die Leute, welche *die* Zwistigkeiten und *die* Aergernisse . . . anrichten."

Dr. H. Menge: "Liebe Brüder, ich ermahne euch, auf der Hut vor den Leuten zu sein, die *die* Spaltungen und Aergernisse anstiften im Gegensatz zu der Lehre, die ihr empfangen habt: geht ihnen aus dem Wege."

So also Phillippi and a host of other commentators.

Someone, no doubt, is now ready to raise the point: couldn't this be a generic article?

One hearing this term only occasionally might suppose that the generic article is the rule while the particularizing article is the exception. The reverse, of course, is the truth.

Still, the generic article is not unusual in certain expressions e.g. substantivated participles. The τοὺς ποιοῦντας of our text, instead of denoting "those definite people who are creating etc." could be understood, apart from its context, as "anyone" or "all those creating." Creating what? "The definite divisions and offenses of which the Romans were aware?" No, that will have to be generic, too: "any divisions and any offenses."

As a result we have four definite articles (every Greek article whether deictic, or generic, is definite), τοὺς, τὰς, τὰ, τὴν, three of which are to be understood generically, and the last only in the normal fashion expected by the average Greek reader who picked up this letter.

If Paul had wanted to emphasize the general character of his warning: "Mark any that create any divisions and any offenses contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and avoid them," he had but to omit these three sentinels, which stand guard against such rendering of the passage. No Greek idiom requires the generic article.

Let us, therefore, understand the τὰς διχοστασίας and the τὰ σκάνδαλα in their normal sense as indicating definite manifestations well-known to the Romans either from their own experience or from travelers' reports.

παρὰ τὴν διδασχὴν ἣν ἐμάθετε

Normally, in both Latin and Greek, prepositional phrases are adverbial. The Latin prepositional phrase is almost exclusively adverbial. The Greek had a certain greater facility in the handling of such phrases through the repetition of the article. If Paul had wanted to say "the divisions and offenses which are contrary to the teaching," he might have been expected to say τὰ σκάνδαλα τὰ παρὰ τὴν διδασχὴν.

Some regard the articles in the expressions τὰς διχοστασίας and τὰ σκάνδαλα, as equivalent to a definite article repeated before παρὰ τὴν διδασχὴν. The meaning then: "the divisions (definite) and the scandals (de-

finite) contrary to the teaching." Those creating the particular divisions and the particular offenses *against the teaching* are to be avoided; those creating other divisions and offenses may safely be disregarded or at least may be treated more leniently. Of course, anyone acquainted with our Lord's teaching on offenses will recognize immediately not only the labored but even the impossible character of such a rendering of the passage.

Another important fact must be taken into account. One accustomed to English thought processes might have no difficulty in accepting the above rendering. Indeed, similar constructions are found on occasion in classical and Koine Greek. The *average* Greek reading this sentence, however, would not understand it that way. To him τοὺς is a block signal warning him to proceed with caution. Something is coming up, very likely a participle. With his gaze focused down the track he passes two torpedoes, διχοστασία and σκάνδαλα, which he recognizes as objects of the participle, now evidently just around the bend. He is not alarmed when another torpedo goes off. He recognizes it as being connected, too, not to the torpedoes he has just passed but to the participle ahead. He glides over the participle and looks down the track for the next signal.

As it is, the phrase παρὰ τὴν διδαχὴν ἣν ἐμάθετε gravitates naturally to that part of the sentence of which it is the adverbial modifier, ποιοῦντας. "Those who, contrary to the teaching which you have learned, are creating divisions and offenses." The *actions* of these men are in direct contradiction to the teaching which the Romans had learned. Which teaching? The whole body of Christian doctrine? Probably. Certainly that particular teaching forbidding the disruptive work in which they were engaged, the teaching of Paul on the maintenance of Christian unity, as, for example, Col. 3:14-17:

"Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Moreover, the teaching of unity in love and work is indeed an important part of the twelfth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, v. 5. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." οὐ δουλεύουσιν: they do not serve: they refuse service (Phillippi). Paul calls on the Colossians: τῷ κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε: "Be slaves of the Lord Christ." (Col. 3, 24.)

The type of men Paul has just described in our passage refuse just this service to our Lord Christ but render it all too gladly to their own belly (cf. original.)

Not only those who wish to water down the passage to make it mean what they want it to mean, but even scholars like Rueckert have considered the "belly" statement rather harsh. Weiss had the answer to their question: "Does Paul really mean 'belly'?" "Er schreibt," he said, "aus langer und reicher Erfahrung." (op. cit. p. 604 note 1.)

The entire New Testament gives not one single clean-cut instance where κοιλία means anything but belly (certainly not "the innermost heart of the believer, which pours fourth spiritual refreshment"—Vincent.) The John 7:38

passage from which Vincent drew that fine definition is alone among the many in its use of *κοιλία*, a translation from the Old Testament, using a graphic figure, meaning just exactly what it says, the whole of which must be interpreted figuratively, without singling out the poor *κοιλία* to bear the whole brunt of the transfer of meaning.

"He that believeth on Me," says Christ (John 7:38,39), "as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the *Spirit*, which they that believe on Him should receive." The whole is a tremendous figure including not only the belly but also the rivers of water, the whole of which is evidently to be interpreted figuratively. In one grand picture, it describes the tremendous influence the Holy Spirit will exert in the world through those who believe in Christ.

It is not sound exegetical procedure to draw from this one passage in John, against which are arrayed at least seven other passages clear and unmistakable in their use of the word, the meaning which Paul meant *κοιλία* to have in Romans 16:18. Particularly in view of the fact that Paul himself, in the two other passages in which he employs the word, has given it a meaning most natural for those passages and for Romans 16:18.

I Cor. 6,13

τὰ βρώματα τῇ κοιλίᾳ, καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν· ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει. τὸ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῇ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι.

Phil. 3, 18,9

πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὕς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία καὶ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες.

(The men described, whose God is their belly, are the enemies of the cross of Christ.)

Paul has been careful not to say: They serve not so much our Lord Christ as their own belly.

Nor has he said: Insofar as they teach false doctrine, they serve not our Lord Christ but their own belly.

The natural interpretation of τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Χριστῷ οὐ δουλεύουσιν is that Paul denies to these particular errorists the predicate "Christian," that he puts them outside the pale of evangelical, historical Christianity.

"Nach der oben nachgeahmten Wortstellung wird zuerst Rücksicht auf einen andern Herrn verneint, dass diese Leute Christo dienen, und erst nachträglich bemerkt, dass sie doch einen Herrn haben, dem sie dienen, nämlich den Bauch." (Theodor Zahn, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, p. 612 note 72.)

TRANSLATION

We are now prepared for a translation of the entire passage:

"I urge you, brethren, to keep an eye on those who, contrary to the teaching which you have learned, are creating the divisions and the offenses. (known to all of us): (and) turn away from them. For such men refuse to serve our Lord Christ but do give service to their own belly, and through their fair and plausible speech they deceive the hearts of the guileless."

Moffat: "Such creatures are no servants of Christ our Lord, they are slaves of their own base desires; with their plausible and pious talk they beguile the hearts of unsuspecting people."

WHO ARE THESE MEN?

What does Paul himself say about them?

In this passage he is not referring to weak Christians. He has just appealed to the Roman Church to treat such Christians with delicate forbearance (ch. 14 and 15.)

He does say that the disturbers

1. are creating notorious divisions and offenses in a manner contrary to the doctrine which the Christians at Rome had learned.

2. are self-servers and, perhaps, even gluttonous.

3. by hypocritical smoothness (*χρηστολογία*) and flattering speech are able to deceive the guileless who, having no guile in their hearts, expect none in others.

No doubt, Paul has these same people in mind in the letter to the Philippians, sent four or five years later from Rome (or, possibly, even a few months before from Ephesus). Phil. 3:18-21: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the *enemies* of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their *belly*, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Luther identifies them by quoting Matt. 24:23 (lo, here or lo there!) and 2 Pet. 2:1 ("But there were false prophets also among the people (of Israel), even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of (blasphemed). And *through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.*") (Martin Luther, *Der Brief an die Römer*, ed. Ch. C. Eberle, Stuttgart, 1878, p. 403.) He further identifies them: "also dass sie nicht mehr denn den blossen Namen und Titel des Evangelii bei sich behalten." (Luther, op. cit. p. 403.) As might be expected, he applies the whole passage to the work righteousness of the Romanists by which they manage to deceive the simple under the guise of the Gospel.

"The Churches of Christ are warned against the artful attempts of dangerous hypocrites who, for sinister and interested purposes, endeavor to make divisions in the churches with which they are united. The injunction does not respect the conscientious errors of good men, but the plausible efforts of men who, under the mask of religion, are serving themselves." (Robt. Haldane, *Exposition of Epistle to Romans*, N. Y., 1853, p. 657.)

"The factious persons, against whom the Apostle here warns the church to which he writes, are to be watched and guarded against. The motives are bad, and their efforts are contrary to the Gospel, and the doctrine which the Church has already learned; for the Gospel teaches unity among all who believe in the Savior." (Haldane, op. cit. p. 658.)

"Diese Gesellen reden die Wahrheit nicht, aus Furcht der schändlichen Armuth, sondern sagen was das Volk gerne hört um der Hoffnung zukünfti-

gen Reichtums willen, daher sie denn ein offenes Grab werden. Alle ihre Lehre geht dahin, dass sie Geld und Gut, Ehre und Reichtum erlangen. Sie sind Diebe und geizig, denn mit *gutem Schein* heiligen Lebens und Lehre betrügen sie die Leute, das man ihnen zuträgt mit Haufen." (Luther, op. cit. p. 405.)

It is apparent that we cannot interpret verse 17 apart from verse 18, nor can we apply the verses separately to modern conditions.

Stoeckhardt's exegesis of verse 17 is excellent. He affirms that the verse applies not only to Judaists but to errorists of "heidnischen Ursprungs." (*Römerbrief*, p. 641.)

Both Stoeckhardt and Kretzmann, however, proceeded to the application of verse 17 immediately and verse 18 is then introduced as an afterthought to furnish justification for the application already made. We do not believe this procedure to be sound exegetical or hermeneutical procedure. (Kretzmann: *Popular Commentary*, N. T. Vol. II.)

Sound exegetical procedure calls for a strict exegesis and then an application based, not upon preconceived notions, or pressure of tradition, but upon that exegesis.

The application of the passage requires that we do not give it a narrower or a broader meaning than it originally had in the situation for which it was intended. We cannot, therefore, apply the passage indiscriminately to the situation within the Lutheran Church today. There may be those in other Lutheran bodies, and in ours, to whom it applies. If there are such, I am not personally acquainted with them, for they are not Christians, but belly servers, intent on fomenting strife in order that they may be able to indulge in good living; people for whom the Gospel ministry is a means of gain, to quote Godet, "and gain the means of satisfying their gross passions."

1 Thess. 5:22

ἀπὸ παντὸς εἶδους πονηροῦ ἀπέχεσθε

These words are found at the end of another apostolic letter, in a context which contrasts the good and the bad. "Test everything," urges Paul, "Stay close to the good, stay away from evil in every form (or every form of evil)."

"Alles vielmehr prüfet, das Gute haltet fest, von Bösem aller Art haltet euch fern!" (G. Wohlenberg, *Der erste und zweite Thessalonicherbrief*, 1909, p. 119.)

The contrast is plain: κατέχετε, on the one hand, ἀπέχεσθε, on the other; καλὸν on the one hand, πονηροῦ on the other.

Luther translates: "meidet allen bösen Schein", evidently understanding πονηροῦ as an adjective modifying εἶδους. It must be acknowledged that this would be good Greek, if such an understanding of the passage did no violence to the context and to the meaning of the word εἶδους. The passage, however, calls for abstention not from an *appearance* (Schein) of evil but, most strongly, from evil itself.

Can πονηροῦ be understood as a noun, though anarthrous? Examples of such a genitive are too frequent to cause any difficulty.

Gen. 2:9: τὸ ξύλον τοῦ εἰδέναι γνωστὸν καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ.

Heb. 5:14: πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ

Didache III, 1: φεῦγε ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὁμοίου αὐτοῦ

(apparently a reminiscence of the I Thess: 5:22 passage)

In addition, Josephus gives us several examples of such usage with εἶδος:

εἶδος μέλουσ Ant. VII 80, IV 2.

πάν εἶδος πονηρίας Ant. X 37, III 1.

What, then, was Paul's intention in the employment of the word, εἶδος? Arguments from etymology mean nothing. The lexicon gives us examples of its use. (Christian Wahl, *Clavis novi testamenti*, p. 85.)

1. species externa, forma—Luke 9:29: "And as he prayed the *fashion* of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and *glistening*." John 5:37: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his *shape*."

2. species generis, die besondere Art einer Gattung—1. Thess. 5:22: "Abstain from every kind, class, form of evil."

3. adspectus—sight—οὐ δι' εἶδους περιπατοῦμεν, oculis non cernimus.

The terms, 1st and 2nd meaning, as used in the following discussion, do not imply that one is better than the other.

If εἶδος is used in sense No. 1 (externa species, forma), the translation of the King James version is substantially correct: "Avoid every appearance of evil" i. e. if "appearance" is understood in the sense of "visible form, manifestation" and not in the sense of "semblance." Avoid every "appearance, manifestation, form" of evil.

Plato and the classical philosophers frequently employ εἶδος in the sense of No. 2: species generis (kind, class). Wahl and others always understood 1 Thess. 5:22 in this sense, although no precedent could be found in the New Testament for this particular meaning of εἶδος

Now, however, discoveries among the papyri have confirmed not only the philosophical but also the popular use of εἶδος in the sense of "kind," or "class."

P. Tebt 58, 20 f (II B.C.), a tax-gatherer undertakes to collect a wheat-tax ἀπὸ παντὸς εἶδους, "from every class."

P. Oxy. 237 VIII f (II A.D.) κατὰ κώμην καὶ κατ' εἶδος, "by villages and classes."

P. Fay. 34, 6 f (II A.D.) where ἄλλα εἶδη seems to refer to "other kinds" of produce on which a certain tax (μὲνοδεσμία) was levied.

The translation of the *Statement* tries to give emphasis to this rendering: "Every form or kind of evil," or better from the viewpoint of English and the context: "evil in every form."

Why did the apostle introduce εἶδος at all? Could he not have said: "Hold fast to the good: stay away from the evil?" He could have but he didn't.

A possible explanation may be found in the popular feeling that good has but one *forma*, evil has many. Aristotle has been quoted in substantiation: ἔτι τὸ μὲν ἀμαρτάνειν πολλαχῶς ἐστὶν—τὸ δὲ κατορθοῦν μοναχῶς. (Nichomachean Ethics II 5,14.) The explanation may be taken for what it is worth.

“Das εἶδος πονηροῦ hier nicht bedeuten kann böser Schein ist jetzt wohl allgemein zugegeben.” (Wohlenberg, p. 120, note 2.)

There is some justification for the rendering: “Avoid every appearance (manifestation) of evil,” better justification for “avoid every form, type of evil” or “avoid evil in every form,” no justification whatsoever for the employment of the passage in the sense: “avoid every appearance (semblance, Schein) of evil” i. e. putting all men on guard to do nothing which someone else may possibly regard as evil.

The application of this passage, within the scope of its meaning as developed by sound exegetical procedure, needs no further elaboration.

The meaning of Scripture is plain. If language were a perfect instrument for human expression and we were perfect receiving sets for its message, we should need no exegetical procedure. Lutheran exegetical procedure with all its rules of hermeneutics is little but sanctified common sense applied to the interpretation of the Scripture, written by God Himself through human instruments in a human tongue. Therefore, we affirm again our thesis “that *sound* exegetical procedure is the basis for sound Lutheran theology.”

VI

1 Cor. 1:2-4—"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ."

St. Luke 22:28-29—"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me."

THESIS VI

We affirm the historic Lutheran position concerning the central importance of the una sancta and the local congregation. We believe that there should be a re-emphasis of the privileges and responsibilities of the local congregation also in the matter of determining questions of fellowship.

We therefore deplore the new and improper emphasis on the synodical organization as basic in our consideration of the problems of the Church. We believe that no organizational loyalty can take the place of loyalty to Christ and His Church.

Thesis VI in the *Statement* has to do with the relation of the *una sancta* (the one Holy Christian Church) and the local congregation to the synodical organization.

The first point to be noted here is that the *una sancta* and the local congregation are divinely instituted, while Synod, with its officers, boards, and committees, is a human institution. This fact must be kept in mind especially with regard to the limitations of the powers of Synod and the duties given by God to the congregation.

The duties and privileges of the congregation are the exercise of the Office of the Keys, the preaching of the Word of God, and the administration of the Sacraments, and thereby the building and strengthening of the *una sancta*. Having been given the Office of the Keys by her Lord, it is, as far as organizations are concerned, in all questions of faith and life the highest court of authority. From the origin and from the duties and privileges of the congregation there follows the fact that our first loyalty must be to Christ and to His Church and our duty must be to keep the rights of the congregation inviolate.

A SYNOD IS A HUMAN INSTITUTION

On the other hand, a synodical organization is a human institution. Membership in the same is not necessarily obligatory upon us, nor has it any God-given authority to be exercised upon such congregations that become its members. Synod, can, of course, like any other organization, establish rules regarding the qualifications of its members. In other words, it can exercise discipline; but it has no control over the congregation as such.

However, we must be careful that we do not undervalue Synod. It can serve very important ends. Some of these important ends are mutual assistance in the preservation of the pure Word of God, the carrying out of joint endeavors in the fields of missions, education, publications, and particularly the training of its clergy. If we are members of a synodical organization we owe it loyalty. However, that loyalty must always be tempered by our greater loyalty to Christ and to the congregation. As members of Synod, we have the right to criticize its resolutions in the light of the Word of God. We must not let our loyalty to Synod restrict our witness-bearing to those who are without or make us suspicious of them or treat them in a manner that does not observe the law of love.

A RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT FEAR

Our relationship to Synod, furthermore, must be freed from all fear, fear of the bearing down of officials, fear of the criticism of the brethren, fear of disciplinary action. The officialdom of Synod is like the executive secretary of an organization. Such a secretary plans, proposes, and carries out policies at the direction of the group but is never to assume police duty or to tell the members of a group what they are able to do or not to do. So, too, with the official and boards of Synod. The Office of the Keys belongs to the individual Christian and to the congregation; boards and officials of Synod must therefore not interfere with nor circumscribe new movements initiated within its circles, if these are in conformity with divine obligations, as if the validity of such endeavors depended upon the approval of Synod's officialdom. Synod's business is not to control but to advise and help. Its officials are its servants, not its masters. Synod ought rather to encourage every movement within its midst whereby the *una sancta* is built and strengthened and whereby our influence in questions of faith and life is exerted upon non-affiliated Christians and upon the world in general.

THE CONGREGATION AND FELLOWSHIP

We must also keep in mind that there are certain obligations which belong to the congregation and which must not be assumed by Synod or Synodical officers and boards. Among these is the question of fellowship. Keeping in mind that fellowship is established neither by the congregation nor

by Synod but by the Holy Spirit, and also that after such fellowship has thus been established and recognized it must eventually be implemented, the members of the local congregation, as the royal priests of God and responsible for the preservation of truth in the Church, should be informed on the questions of fellowship and on their responsibility to decide such questions. A mere resolution on the part of Synod declaring that our Synod is henceforth in pulpit and altar fellowship with another church body cannot legislate for a given congregation. The question of fellowship is posed for our Synod as a common problem which we believe should be earnestly studied by all of our pastors, congregations and officials.

VII

Rom. 5:10-11—"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

THESIS VII

We affirm our abiding faith in the historic Lutheran position concerning the centrality of the Atonement and the Gospel as the revelation of God's redeeming love in Christ.

We therefore deplore any tendency which reduces the warmth and power of the Gospel to a set of intellectual propositions which are to be grasped solely by the mind of man.

The doctrine of the Atonement occupies the very heart of the Christian religion. The guilty sinner in his despair pleads: "How can I become reconciled and united with an offended God?" All religions are faced with this all-important question. The Christian religion has the only and completely satisfying answer.

God has opened His heart and revealed His grace in the Gospel, "to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation . . . For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:19, 21. The pardoned sinner expresses his joy: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.." Rom. 5:1, 11. This revelation of God's redeeming love in Christ is the essence of the Gospel, the one central theme of the Holy Scripture, the very heart of the Christian religion.

Soon after the Church of Jesus Christ was established the Apostolic and Post Apostolic fathers veered away from the doctrine of the vicarious Atonement and became involved in teaching and preaching moralism. Prior to the Reformation, the Church at large had lost the central doctrine of the Gospel. The Augsburg Confession states (XX, 8. *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 53): "Forasmuch, therefore, as the doctrine concerning faith, which ought to be the chief one in the Church, has lain so long unknown, as all must needs grant that there was the deepest silence in their sermons concerning the righteousness of faith, while only the doctrine of works was treated in the churches."

Under God, Luther and the Lutheran Church of the sixteenth century fully restored the *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, the doctrine of the vicarious Atonement, to its proper place, and laid down as its common confession the Formula of Concord, in which it professed: "This article concerning justification by faith (as the Apology says) is the chief article in the entire Christian doctrine, without which no poor conscience can have any firm consolation, or can truly know the riches of the grace of Christ, as Dr. Luther also has written: 'If this only article remains pure on the battlefield, the Christian Church also remains pure, and in goodly harmony and without any sects; but if it does not remain pure, it is not possible that any error or fanatical spirit can be resisted,'"—(Thorough Declaration, III, 6. *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 917.) In spite of papism, Calvinism, and modernism by the grace of God we cling to this historic Lutheran position. We declare the doctrine of the vicarious Atonement to be the *articulus fundamentalissimus*, the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*. (The article by which the Church stands and falls.)

CONSTRUCTING DOCTRINE LIKE LOGIC

We dare not close our eyes, however, to the danger signals that scream at us from the pages of Church history. There is the ever present danger to look upon the accepted *corpus doctrinae* as a set of intellectual propositions which are to be grasped merely by the mind of man. The Church of all ages has not only been exposed to, but to a more or less extent fallen into, this pitfall. The Old Testament Church produced "the traditions of the elders." Prominent among the great leaders of the Church in the Middle Ages were the scholastics, who compiled a conglomeration of Scripture truths and human traditions and engaged in dialectics and speculation to harmonize, prove, and defend their propositions. These men might have had a head knowledge of the Scriptures, a *cognito sensus literalis* (knowledge of the exact meaning), but their heart remained dark and cold. Of such the Apology of the Augsburg Confession says (III, 262): "They (the scholastics) understand by faith merely a knowledge of the history, or dogma, and do not understand by it that virtue which apprehends the promise of grace and of righteousness which quickens the hearts."

SILENCING THE HEART

We do not want to intimate, or insinuate, that any member of our Synod has joined the school of the scholastics. Nevertheless, we must constantly, especially in an era of controversy, when emotions run high, tempers are irritated, and brotherly relations become starved, guard against the danger of silencing the heart and operating with the head, of sniping, and

of engaging in dialectic skirmishes which are not motivated by the love of Christ and of the brethren. Collectively and individually we must beware of a dead orthodoxy, of a mere *cognitio sensus literalis*, and ever cultivate an orthodoxy that throbs with faith in the redeeming love of God in Christ and with a warm love for the brethren. Our faith must give evidence of the fruits of the spirit, such as love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. Our conduct, our facial expression, our voice, our pen, should bear witness that we are speaking the truth when we say with St. Paul: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The admonition of St. Paul is in place even today and even among the Synodical Conference clergy: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. 4:1-3.

VIII

Eph. 4:6—"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Gal. 3:26—"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

THESIS VIII

We affirm our conviction that any two or more Christians may pray together to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ if the purpose for which they meet and pray is right according to the Word of God. This obviously includes meetings of groups called for the purpose of discussing doctrinal differences.

We therefore deplore the tendency to decide the question of prayer fellowship on any other basis beyond the clear words of Scripture.

Thesis VIII finds its warrant in all that the Scripture teaches concerning Christian prayer.

We are agreed that prayer to the Triune God in the name of Jesus is the duty and the high privilege of all Christians. Such prayer reflects and gives expression to the relationship in which every Christian stands to God. By faith in Jesus the Christian is a dear child of the great God. Of that relationship Jesus reminds us in the address of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father who art in heaven." Read also Luther's beautiful explanation of this address. The objects of Christian prayer are all things which tend to the glory of God, and to our own and our neighbor's welfare.

The duty and the high privilege of prayer is not voided by the fact that many Christians err in certain points of doctrine. No error that does not destroy saving faith and the status of Christianity will deprive the Christian of the duty and privilege of prayer. On the contrary, the very danger, the very fact of error, and the weakness of our human nature, should increase the fervency of prayer to God to keep us in the truth, to preserve

and extend God-pleasing unity of spirit and faith in all revealed doctrines of Holy Writ.

The common duty and privilege of Christian prayer should in the will of God be *commonly and jointly exercised*. The Lord Jesus teaches us to pray: "*Our Father* who art in heaven." Our Catechism answers the question: "Why do we say: 'Our Father'?" thus "We say '*Our Father*' because the believers in Christ throughout the world are the *children of one Father*, and therefore pray *for and with one another*." (Ques. 216, p. 152 of *Luther's Small Catechism*, Concordia Publishing House, 1943.) Christians should join in bringing their common needs to the throne of grace, implore common blessings, join in thanksgiving, etc.

PRAYING WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

The joint exercise of the common privilege of prayer is indeed voided when joint prayers would reveal or imply indifference to, or approval of error, a denial of revealed Scriptural truth. When, for example, a group of erring Christians unite in prayer for the successful propagation of their particular erroneous doctrines (sectarian gatherings as such), then certainly the orthodox Christian may not join them. Thesis VIII does not in any way approve of that. It speaks of prayer "to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ if the purpose for which they meet and pray is *right* according to the Word of God."

The common exercise of the common Christian privilege of prayer is *not voided* when on given occasion, in given circumstances, in common great needs, Christians, erring and orthodox, meet and jointly pray to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ for the granting of blessings which God wants them to have and to pray for, be they bodily or spiritual blessings, as when God tells them: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." Ps. 50:15; or when they pray for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit into all truth, and for God-pleasing unity on the basis of common submission to, and acceptance of, His Word.

PRAYER AND CONFESSION

Prayer *per se* is not a confession. It is primarily a matter between the Christian and his God. (Ps. 27: 7-9; Rom. 8:15.) The primary purpose of Christian prayer is to bring our petitions before God, to offer up praise and thanksgiving. Unspoken prayers of the heart cannot be confession before men. (Ps. 19:14; Ps. 10:17; Is. 65:24, etc.) This applies also to prayers in private, Matt. 6:6.

Any speech, act, or attitude *may* become and be a confession or denial of truth. Christ's healings on the Sabbath, His healing of the paralytic, Matt. 9:6, were confessions. Peter's conduct at Antioch was a denial of the truth, Gal. 2:11ff. So joint prayer may under certain circumstances be a confession or a denial of truth, as was stated above. It is claimed by some that joint prayer with Christians who differ with us in certain points of doctrine is under any and every circumstance a denial of truth, "unionism," etc. *There is no Scriptural ground for such a claim.* Christians differing in certain points of doctrine may join in prayer on the basis of their common relationship to God, as His children, in obedience to God's command and trusting in His promise. A group of Christians of various Christian denominations may find themselves together in dire straits, in a foxhole, or afloat in a life-raft. Mindful only of their great need and of their Heavenly Father's

gracious word: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me," Ps. 50:15, they may and should join in fervent prayer for deliverance, and eventually in thanksgiving. The Lutheran Christian in such a group is by no stretch of imagination guilty of sinful unionism when he joins in such prayer. There is no confession concerning doctrinal differences involved at all, but only the confession of their common reliance upon the love and power and faithfulness of their common Savior.

"TO THEM THAT ASK HIM"

This applies also to joint prayers at inter-synodical conferences held for the God-pleasing purpose of achieving unity on the basis of God's Word. Upon uniting in prayer for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit into the truth definitely rests the Savior's promise: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Luke 11:13. Such prayers are obviously the very opposite of indifference to, or denial of truth; they reflect the love of, and sincere desire for, the truth of God's word.

Cases may be multiplied in which "two or more Christians may pray together to the Triune God in the name of Jesus Christ if the purpose for which they meet and pray is right according to the Word of God."

The exercising of the God-given duty and privilege of jointly praying for blessings which God Himself invites us to pray for, cannot be conditioned by the opinions of men nor by the effect this is alleged to have upon them. Any limitations of joint prayer with Christians must be indicated by Him who has commanded us to pray and promises to hear us.

IX

Jer. 23:1-2—"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord."

St. Matt. 15:9—"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

THESIS IX

We believe that the term "unionism" should be applied only to acts in which a clear and unmistakable denial of Scriptural truth or approval of error is involved.

We therefore deplore the tendency to apply this non-Biblical term to any and every contact between Christians of different denominations.

The term "unionism" is not a Biblical term. Unlike other non-Biblical terms, such as "Trinity," this term, in the sense of "religious unionism," is so new in the English language that the latest edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary* does not recognize it. Yet the term has obtained a currency among us that is phenomenal, and, perhaps due to the fact that there is no definition for it in the dictionary, everybody who uses it seems to have his own definition for it. At least, it has often been used in our circles in condemnation of practices that involved none of the things that a correct use of the term would cover.

Our own *Concordia Cyclopedia* has attempted to define the term. It states:

"Religious unionism consists in joint worship and work of those not united in doctrine."

The best one can say for this definition is that it is correct as far as it goes.

Actually it is incomplete. It does not take into account the factor that *religious unionism involves the denial of Scriptural truth or the compromise with error.*

Of course, it may be claimed that this is implied in the *Cyclopedia's* definition. However, a definition that does not define expressly and clearly can never be wholly satisfactory. This is true particularly of theological terms, and even more particularly when these are to be understood by our laity. We instruct our laity in this matter of religious unionism. We expect them to be able to sit in judgment on their pastors. The fact is that much of our instruction on this point in the past has been vague and indefinite and has caused our laity to be confused.

On the other hand, I find that our pastors, at least many of them, are not clear in their own minds as to the true meaning of this term. Therefore, many of them have gone too far in the judgment of fellow-pastors, in their application of the term to a given case. Or, in order not to have themselves branded as unionists, pastors have leaned so far back in their own practice that they have sedulously eschewed every contact, even social, with ministers of other Lutheran synods or of other Christian denominations, even in areas in which it would have been entirely proper.

"UNIONISM" DEFINED

In one of the essays presented at the meeting in Chicago last September, the essayist made the following statement:

"We protest against the thoughtless, unreasoning, loveless, arbitrary, and irresponsible manner in which the word 'unionism' is employed by the spirit which is coming into our Synod and which already has done so much harm."

Then, after correctly defining the term "unionism," the essayist added this paragraph:

"Before anyone dare be justly accused of unionism, however, it must be shown that he actually did deny the truth or approve of error. This has been observed less and less in our Synod. It has actually come to this, that a person is accused of unionism no matter how earnestly, correctly, and courageously he bore witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, just so long as others were on the platform with him who did not agree with him in every point of doctrine. The conclusion is immediately drawn that such a one by his very presence with others of a differing faith thereby approved of all their erroneous views and sold out the truth to the devil."

This quotation sufficiently demonstrates what our group had in mind when this *Statement*, and particularly Thesis IX, was drawn up. It is our considered opinion that all religious unionism is wrong, is conceived in evil, and can have only an evil issue. It is also our considered opinion that not everything that is labeled religious unionism by many in Synod can by any stretch of imagination correctly be called by that term.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

As to the term itself: Historically the term refers to union efforts between church groups not in doctrinal agreement. As examples I may cite the union efforts during the Middle Ages between the Latin Western Church and the

Greek Eastern Church. Or, after the Reformation, efforts to unite the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics: or the efforts to bring together the Lutherans and the Reformed which had their culmination in the Prussian Union of 1817.

The use of the term as between Lutheran groups, as far as I have been able to determine, is an American innovation. Originally, it was due to the fact that when our fathers established themselves on American soil they found some Lutheran groups which were in some way too closely affiliated with the Reformed, an affiliation that manifested itself in various ways. Some groups were doing joint church work with the Reformed, as in union revivals. Some of the synods connected with the old General Synod were guilty of this. Then within the General Synod we have the movement known as "American Lutheranism," which aimed at the excision from the Augsburg Confession of the distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran Church (the "Definite Synodical Platform"). Others made concessions to the Reformed by setting aside the Lutheran distribution formula and using instead the unionistic distribution formula of the "Unierte." Others did joint mission work with the Reformed, at least for a time, both in the home mission field and in the foreign field. (The General Synod and the A.B.C.F.M.)

However, our own synodical fathers, after organizing a Synod of their own on a soundly Lutheran basis, both as to doctrine and practice, were very careful to make the proper distinction as to what constitutes religious unionism in practice. If we do not bear this in mind we cannot correctly understand some of their actions, nor why the fathers never shouted "unionist" at each other.

THE EXAMPLE OF DR. WALTHER

A number of instances may be cited by way of illustration, for example, Dr. C. F. W. Walther himself. He did not hesitate for a moment to take part in free conferences with Lutherans of other synods not affiliated with Missouri. Nor did he hesitate to join in prayer and worship with them in connection with these free conferences. The list of our men who joined Dr. Walther in this is practically a catalogue of our synodical fathers. (*Lutheraner*, XIII, 7, 49.)

Dr. Walther did not hesitate to call a General Synod pastor into St. Louis when he needed someone to help him start English work in this city. He sought for the wholehearted cooperation of this man, advertised his services in the newspapers at his own expense, introduced him to his people, urged them to attend the English services, arranged the services himself, and was a most sorely disappointed man when the effort failed for lack of interest on the part of his own young people. (*Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XVII, 3, p. 91 ff.)

Dr. Walther did not hesitate to join other German Christians in St. Louis for the purpose of establishing a German Christian political newspaper (*St. Louiser Volksblatt*), in order to combat atheism and agnosticism in the local German press at the time. (*Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XVIII, 4, p. 108 ff.) He traveled all the way to Canada to convince one of our pastors that he had a more important call to become editor of this paper than the call he had to the congregation which he was serving. The Western District, by formal resolution, supported Dr. Walther in his stand. (*Western District Report*, 1856, p. 39.) On that occasion, Dr. Walther stopped at Buffalo and attended Pastor Grabau's Church, joining in the service; after

receiving the absolution from Grabau, he made his classic remark: "You must pronounce the absolution of my sins upon me, even though you think that I am a rabble-protector." (Guenther: *Dr. C. F. W. Walther*, p. 97.)

FROM THE LABORS OF THE FATHERS

When the well known Pastor J. A. F. Mueller, the first graduate of Concordia Seminary, represented our Synod at the meeting in Reading, Pa., in which the constitution of the General Council was drawn up in 1866, he took part in the work of the meeting and joined in the divine services arranged during that time. (Ochsenford: *Documentary History of the General Council*, p. 131 ff.)

When the delegates of the Pennsylvania Ministerium were about to sever their connections with the old General Synod at its convention in Ft. Wayne in 1866, preliminary to calling the meeting for the formation of the General Council, Dr. Sihler, pastor of St. Paul's Church in Ft. Wayne, did not hesitate to commune members of the Ministerium's delegation at his altar. (Jacobs, *Lutherans*, p. 471. See also Brobst's *Lutherische Zeitschrift*, 1866, p. 100.)

Again and again pastors of our Synod preached in pulpits of other Lutheran bodies. Prof. Biewend, during his stay in Ft. Wayne as professor at our Practical Seminary, regularly preached in the English Church there which belonged to the old General Synod. (H. C. Wyneken: *Adolph Fr. Th. Biewend*, p. 62.)

At least two of our synodical reports of those years mention the fact that during the sessions of our General Synodical Conventions in Ft. Wayne some of the clerical delegates preached in English churches. (Cp. Synodical Reports of 1857 and 1863.)

Other examples may be cited that bring us down to recent times, but these will suffice.

THE SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION

The practice of the fathers in this respect was based on principles that had been carefully set forth. For example, an essay on "Pulpit Fellowship" was accepted by the Central District at its meeting in Cleveland in 1870, in which the whole matter was presented in twelve theses, of which XI and XII are pertinent.

Thesis XI: We can imagine instances in which pulpit fellowship can be defended (although it is not said that it necessarily must take place).

Thesis XII: It is not to be criticised in a preacher if he mounts pulpits of other churches to preach the Gospel, provided the circumstances under which and the manner in which it is done are proper. (Central District Report, 1870, p. 14 ff.)

(See also *Lehre und Wehre*, 1870, p. 124 f.)

The Biblical basis for these theses is of course the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ always has the right of way, and in the discussion of these theses it was rightly pointed out that our Lord and His apostles preached in the synagogues and in the precincts of the temple, and that the Apostle Paul even preached before the heathen philosophers on Mars Hill.

Again and again we have heard it said that we must be careful not to cast our pearls before the swine, but Dr. H. C. Schwan already pointed out

in his propositions of 1862: "It is not evangelical practice to cast the pearls before the swine, but much less is it evangelical practice to keep them in one's pocket." (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, XVI, 5, p. 289.) He here is referring to the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30) in which our Lord declares that He has no use for the servant who, fearing his master's wrath, buries his talent.

In view of our Lord's positive command, "Preach the Gospel to every creature," (Mark 16:15) and Paul's charge to Timothy: "Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season," (2 Tim. 2:4), and Peter's injunction: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear," (1 Peter 3:15) it behooves us all to be very sure that we dare never out of fear of being labeled "unionists" forego any opportunity that may come to us to preach the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, when circumstances are such as not to involve us in a denial of the very Gospel which we are to preach.

A PLEA FOR PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

It also follows necessarily from the foregoing that in order to check further incursions in our circles of loose and irresponsible criticism of brethren as being unionists, that we prayerfully re-think the whole matter of religious unionism; that we all exercise extreme care before we pass judgment upon a brother adversely because we do not agree with his application of the principle involved; and that we respect the judgment of a Christian brother with all charity, giving him the full benefit of any doubt. For in the final analysis, neither Synod, nor a conference, nor a group of brethren, but the individual brother himself must decide, on the basis of the Word of God, what is to be done in a given case. It is both his privilege and his responsibility; to quote from the famous Akron-Galesburg Rule: "The determination of the exceptions is to be made in consonance with these principles, by the conscientious judgment of the pastors as the cases arise." That is evangelical, that is brotherly, and that is Scriptural.

X

Rom. 14:10-13—"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother: for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

THESIS X

We affirm the historic Lutheran position that no Christian has a right to take offense at anything which God has commanded in His Holy Word. The plea of offense must not be made a cover for the irresponsible expression of prejudices, traditions, customs, and usages.

This thesis is an adjunct or consequence of the two previous propositions, which treat of prayer fellowship and unionism, respectively, since it is principally in these two spheres that the plea of offense is being made.

The thesis begins with a rather broad statement which, on first reading, may seem to be meaningless. But let us take a brief look at the term "offense," or rather at its Greek original *skandalon*, which occurs some twelve or thirteen times in the New Testament, and is used mainly by Matthew, Paul, and Peter. "Offense" is a rather colorless translation which fails to bring out the connotation of the term. *skandalon* is the trap, more particularly the trap-stick or trigger, and implies the purpose of catching, entrapping, or ensnaring, which is of some importance in interpreting Romans 16. Cremer, in distinguishing *skandalon* from *proskomma*, says that the latter always denotes the offense that is taken, and therefore is unintentional, whereas *skandalon* usually expresses intention, as may be seen from the way these terms are used in Romans 16:13.

However, *skandalon* does not always mean the offense that is given. For instance, the preaching of Christ and His cross is called a *skandalon* both by Paul and Peter. Now, it goes without saying that God never intends that anyone should be entrapped or destroyed by the preaching of Christ Crucified. And yet, how many were and are not offended by it, especially among the Jews! To mention but one concrete example, Peter was most deeply offended when Jesus made the first announcement of His death, without even mentioning the cross, and in turn became a *skandalon*, though unwittingly. Yet even here *skandalon* retains its connotation of intent to ensnare. Peter was the mouthpiece of Satan, who was using him as a trap to divert Jesus from the cross, and, as one commentator aptly adds: "Since we cannot ascribe sinister motive to a trap itself, but only to him who sets it, it is to Satan, not to Peter, that the sinister motive must be ascribed." But God has no such evil intentions when He has the Gospel preached in the world. And since the whole question of offense obviously needs restudy, we might as well begin with the broad statement of the thesis: "No Christian has a right to take offense at anything which God has commanded in His Holy Word." That goes for the sphere of faith as well as that of morals and life. Abraham had no right to take offense at the extraordinary command given him with respect to his son, and he did not. Peter had no right to take offense at the vision in Joppa and God's command with respect to eating and unclean meats: he did not take offense at first but later he changed his attitude and endangered the liberty of the Gospel.

A CHAPTER ON "OFFENSE"

Dr. F. Pieper, in a brief chapter in his *Christian Dogmatics* (Vol. I, page 672 f.) entitled, "*Die Schriftlehre vom Aergernis*", says "To give offense means to teach or to do anything by which another is led either not to believe, or to believe error, or to lead a wicked life, so that his faith is either endangered or destroyed." This is the primary meaning of *skandalon*.

However, continues Dr. Pieper, "offense is given not only by doing that which is evil (false doctrine, ungodly life), but also through the unwise use of adiaphora (e. g. eating meat, drinking wine); for in this way weak brethren may be occasioned to do something which their erring consciences regard as wrong."

And then Dr. Pieper sums it up by saying, "From this follows the general rule of Christian conduct that believers must at all times be willing to yield their Christian liberty, unless the truth of the Gospel is at stake. But just as soon as a weak brother (so-called) demands that his error be acknowledged as truth and insists upon promulgating it, he is no longer a weak brother whose weakness can be tolerated, but a false prophet who judges and condemns true believers for using their knowledge. If a person takes offense because a confessing Christian is compelled to use his Christian liberty on account of the confession involved, no guilt attaches to such a Christian for using his liberty for the Gospel's sake. The guilt rather attaches to those who compel the Christian to insist upon his liberty." (Galatians 2.)

IN A THREEFOLD SENSE

To sum up, then, offense is used in a threefold sense in Holy Scripture:

- a. The cross and Christ Crucified is a *skandalon* at which men take offense, 1 Cor. 1; 1 Pet. 2.

- b. We are earnestly warned against giving offense, particularly to the little ones, by false doctrine and ungodly life, thereby causing them to stumble and eventually fall away from the faith; Matt. 18; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:1.
- c. Finally there is the offense taken in adiaphora. Rom. 14; I Cor. 8.

"OFFENSE" AS A COVER

Coming now to the second part of our thesis, let us see "how the plea of offense has been made a cover for the irresponsible expression of prejudice, tradition, customs, and usages, particularly in the sphere of prayer fellowship and unionism."

In his tract on *Prayer Fellowship*, p. 9, Dr. Theodore Graebner points out that there is a difference between prayer fellowship on the one hand and altar and pulpit fellowship on the other (Cf also Chap. 7-11 of Graebner-Kretzmann, *Toward Lutheran Union*). The latter, particularly altar fellowship, is intimately linked with confessional fellowship, whereas prayer is not *per se* a confessional act, but an act of communion with God. And yet, how often is not a brother judged and condemned, without Scriptural warrant, for making use of his Christian prerogative of praying with a fellow-believer who may not belong to the same branch of the visible church! In adjudicating an appeal in 1935 at the Cleveland Convention, Synod put the burden of proof on the person who wants to deny a Christian the right of praying with fellow-Christians, whenever this is done without denial of truth or support of error.

The point is that the brother pleading violation of conscience must prove that an actual wrong has been committed, and he must prove it from Holy Writ. He cannot assume the role of prosecuting attorney, judge, and jury, in addition to setting up a rule, whether of his own making or received by tradition from the fathers. By simply accusing a brother of giving offense he takes the entire matter of judgment into his own hands. He will be hard put to it to find Scripture proof, since the texts usually quoted by us do not speak of prayer fellowship at all. If the Pastoral Conferences throughout Synod "had earnestly and diligently studied the Scripture passages pertinent to the question of prayer fellowship," as suggested by Synod in 1935, much of the current misunderstanding and controversy would, in my humble opinion, have been avoided.

Then there are of course some brethren who use the term "offense" in the non-Biblical sense of something that annoys them or gives them displeasure. Was not much of the so-called "offense" taken during the recent liturgical controversy, and also in the language question some thirty and forty years ago, mostly of this sort?

WHY TAKE OFFENSE?

With respect to unionism, we are all opposed to sinful unionism, that is, joint worship and work with those who ignore doctrinal differences, deny verbal inspiration, preach another Gospel, and actually unite believers and unbelievers in pew and pulpit. But why are honest efforts at cooperation *in externis* so often frowned upon? We know that practically all Lutheran synods stand with us not only on the so-called real foundation (Christ), the organic foundation (the Holy Scriptures), and the dogmatic foundation (the doctrine of justification through faith), but in addition subscribe to the Book of Concord. Why then take offense if some of our brethren co-

operate in externals with other Lutherans, say in the sphere of welfare work? Cooperation of a sort was practiced during the stress of war under the watchful eye of many brethren and in some cases with unjustifiable criticism. Now that the war is over, could not united representation by all Lutheran Churches before their own government and other governments smooth the way, e. g., for the return of Lutheran missionaries to their field and hasten the distribution of relief among the starving peoples of Europe?

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE

In conclusion, let us apply Lincoln's words: "With malice toward none, with charity for all," first of all to our own brethren in the ministry. We are tolerant about questions of casuistry in pastoral theology; let us be equally tolerant in our judgment of certain incidents which seem to some to be "sinful unionism." In short, let us get rid of negative attitudes, recapture the ecumenical and evangelical spirit of the fathers, and make it possible for our brethren who are loyal to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions to do their work without being continually charged with giving offense and condemned the moment they step out of a groove sanctified only by traditional practice. Let us cease binding the consciences of our brethren with opinions, prejudices, and customs of men, and walk and work in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

XI

Rom. 15:13-14—"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

THESIS XI

*We affirm our conviction that in keeping with the historic Lutheran tradition and in harmony with the Synodical resolution adopted in 1938 regarding Church fellowship, such fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church.**

Let it be noted from the very outset that this statement does not say that deviations from Scriptural doctrine are right or permissible. There is offered here no brief for error either in doctrine or practice. Nor does it release anyone from testifying against such error. The statement does not say that differences in doctrine or practice are to be ignored, covered up, defended, or given any claim to rightful existence.

What the statement does mean to say is that it is possible to deal with certain aberrations in either doctrine or practice without disrupting, or severing or denying Church fellowship on their account. We would not, and do not, claim for ourselves the privilege of deviating in the slightest from any

*This exposition of Thesis XI was prefaced by a request from the writer that three facts be kept in mind: 1. That Synod in 1938 declared that disagreement in certain so-called non-fundamental doctrines need not be divisive of Church fellowship; — 2. That pressure is noticeable for the demand that complete agreement in all details of doctrine and practice be required for Church fellowship; — 3. That the Saginaw Convention in 1944 recommended the following definition of "a Scriptural doctrine": (See *Proceedings* 1944, p. 250): "A Scriptural doctrine is a truth contained in, expressed by, or properly drawn from Scripture."

doctrine, or even any statement of the Bible. But that is not the question here involved. It is merely this: Must we sever the bond of fellowship with, or must we refuse to acknowledge and receive into fellowship, one who is not in complete and detailed agreement with us on all points? The statement holds that it is possible to have fellowship even where such complete agreement is still lacking.

UPON A SOUND BASIS

This thesis rests clearly on safe Scriptural and historically Lutheran ground. After three and a half years of instruction from the Savior Himself the disciples on the day of His ascension were still of the erroneous opinion and expectation that He would establish a glorious earthly kingdom. The Master does not cut them off for their error. He does not even flatly contradict them or set them right, but merely answers: "It is not for you to know, etc." Acts 1:6 ff. Even after Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost had led the Apostles into all truth, Peter is still, or again, of the opinion that the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament in regard to forbidden meats, etc., are still binding, and argues against the command of God to eat, (Acts 10). He is not cast out on this account. In the Apostolic Church, at the Synod of Jerusalem (Acts 15), many were still of the opinion that circumcision must be required of the Gentiles. Luther, for his many errors from which he only gradually was made free, should have been excluded from Christian fellowship at many a point in his life, if complete agreement in all details of doctrinal fixation is to be a prerequisite for Church fellowship.

Our own Synod's declared position (see, e. g., *Proceeding*, 1938; Graebner-Kretzmann, *Toward Lutheran Union*; and Graebner, *Prayer Fellowship*) is in harmony with the *Statement* in Thesis XI. Our whole conduct toward the Wisconsin Synod, in spite of differences of many years standing, is proof that we follow the *Statement* and acknowledge that Church fellowship can exist without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice.

MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM

The *maximum* of agreement to strive for is, of course, complete and most detailed agreement in every doctrine and practice and concerning every statement of Scripture. But we shall never reach that maximum. As Dr. Walther has said: "The church militant has indeed the duty to strive after absolute unity in faith and doctrine as the goal, but it never attains a higher degree of unity than a unity in fundamentals." (Quoted in Graebner, *Prayer Fellowship*, p. 23. See also *Toward Lutheran Union*, pp. 42, 57, 76, 77, 129 f.)

On the other hand, it is just as important to know how to approach to the irreducible *minimum* requirement for Church fellowship. If at any point down to where that irreducible minimum is reached, we should separate ourselves from our erring fellow-Lutherans, we would be making of our Missouri Synod a sect. With such separatism our Synod is not well served nor God well pleased.

Thesis XI, then in no way grants a license to error, but only provides the proper safeguard against separatism and sectarianism.

WHAT IS A DOCTRINE?

The Saginaw Convention of 1944 rather complicated this whole matter by its quite novel definition of "a Scripture doctrine." The term "doctrine"

or "article of faith" has always had a rather definite and restricted connotation in both the Scriptures and in the systematic theological literature of the Church. Saginaw abandoned this and gave us the new and much wider definition: "A Scriptural doctrine is a truth contained in, expressed by, or properly drawn from Scripture." And if the demand for complete agreement in all points of doctrine were a proper demand, its scope is by this definition enlarged to a demand for complete agreement on *every* statement of Scripture before prayer-, pulpit-, and altar-fellowship can be engaged in; possibly including also the deductions and conclusions of men, fallible men, when properly (seeming to mean "logically") drawn.

But what is a doctrine or an article of faith? Johann Gerhard in his *Loci Theologici* (Ed. Preuss III, 412 ff.) says: "Since those things which are propounded in the Scriptures as matters of faith are not all of one kind, but some pertain to faith, directly, and *per se*, and others only in certain respects and remotely, such as historical description of deeds performed by the saints, so not all matters contained in the Scriptures can be regarded as articles of faith, strictly and accurately speaking, but only those doctrines the knowledge of which is necessary to salvation." After an appeal to Thomas Aquinas, he continues: "If the Jesuits in the Colloquium at Ratisbon had observed this principle of their teacher, they never would have blurted forth the assertion: 'It is an article of faith that the dog of Tobias wagged his tail.'" Hollatius defines thus: "A true article of faith must be: a) revealed in the written word of God; b) have reference to the salvation of man; c) be intimately connected with the remaining doctrines of the faith; and d) be not apparent to unaided reason." (Cited from Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, Hays—Jacobs translation).

In the light of the above time-tested definition and characterization of a Scriptural doctrine or article of faith, it seems to be stretching the point too far to declare: "A Scriptural doctrine is a truth contained in, expressed by, or properly drawn from Scripture." Certainly, *every* statement of the Bible is absolutely true, but not every Scriptural truth ought to be called a doctrine. It is true, e. g., David did chop off Goliath's head with that giant's own sword; but would we call that a doctrine and an article of faith? It is true, too, that every Christian ought to accept every statement of the Scripture, including possibly also the analytical (not the synthetic) deductions and conclusions. It would seem, indeed, if the Saginaw definition is to stand and be given full scope, that those who would require agreement in *all* doctrines before permitting altar and pulpit fellowship, might be forced to give up what has been so plausibly advanced as a prerequisite for a declaration of unity and cooperation.

SOME RECENT PRONOUNCEMENTS

In the field of practice there is, of course, one question which has been the source of much trouble and debate: the so-called lodge question, whether lodge-members may be members of Lutheran congregations; specifically, whether they may be admitted to the Lord's Table. It will be necessary in the consideration of this question and its possible solution to keep in mind the outstanding and recent pronouncements in reference thereto.

The extreme position is the one expressed by the Synodical Conference in 1904: "A lodge-member who desires to come to the Lord's Table and to show forth the Lord's death, and is ready to do so, too, can do this only on this wise, that he turn his back upon the lodge, sever his connection

therewith, and terminate his membership. And this must be done *before* he can come to Holy Communion." (*Bericht: Synodalkonferenz 1904*, p. 44.) This extreme position was, however, prefaced by the remark that this is to apply only to well-organized congregations (p. 40), and this again was, in a measure, limited thus: "We here do not want to say that there could not exist such altogether abnormal circumstances in regard to which a paper laying down a general rule can pass no judgment. How to act in such cases must be left to the conscience and wisdom of the individual pastor." (ibid p. 40.)

In 1929, Synod at River Forest, Illinois, after much agitation and study on the part of individuals, committees, and conferences, and having before it the report of a special lodge investigating committee, resolved: "That Synod hereby declare that it is, and shall be, the practice of our Synod not to administer Holy Communion to members of lodges. Therefore, be it further . . . 3) Resolved, that we do not deny that a conscientious pastor may under certain conditions ("In cases which present unusual features, rendering their classification difficult") administer Holy Communion to a person who is still outwardly connected with a lodge. But in such a case the pastor shall earnestly beware of procrastinating and giving offense, and to this end he shall freely and conscientiously consult with his vestry and congregation, his brethren in the ministry, and with the officials of Synod, as the case may require." (*Proceedings 1929*).

THE PROBLEM STATED

If in this entire situation we were dealing with lodge-members who from the heart accepted the lodge religion there would be no difficulty. All are agreed that in such cases a lodge member should not be admitted to the Lord's Table. But, just as the Apocalypse refers to some "who say they are Jews, and are not" (Rev. 2:9), and just as there are Christians who say they are Christians, and are not, but are such only in name and by association, so, too, there are lodge-members who are such only by name and by association. There are lodge-members who are not idol-worshippers, who do not hold to the lodge religion of salvation by their own moral conduct, but who still, and sometimes very firmly, cling to the faith in the only Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ and forgiveness of sins and salvation through His blood and righteousness, without any merit or worthiness in themselves. These are not guilty of idolatry nor of work-righteousness. They do not themselves commit the sins of the real lodge-member; they merely appear to be doing so and are, withal, unable to see that they are partakers in other men's sins.

Here is a real problem. What shall we do with a *Christian*, albeit one who to all appearance is connected with false religion and idol worship? The degree of ignorance concerning the nature of the lodge, or his possible indifference in the entire premises, or the mental inability to identify the practices of the lodge with the sins of which we accuse them—these and similar factors must be taken into consideration in dealing with such folk. And in doing so, how far are we in any given instance from those cases concerning which even the extreme position of the Synodical Conference conceded: "Wie da zu handeln muss dem Gewissen und der Weisheit des einzelnen Pastors anheimgestellt werden."

NO CAUSE FOR DISRUPTING FELLOWSHIP

A comparison of the published resolutions on the lodge question does hold forth the hope that a formula for a common, Scriptural practice can and will be found, which does not violate any principle of casuistry, nor yet abandon the whole matter, because of unpleasant difficulties, to a mere policy of expediency.

In the meantime, the differences that have developed in this field of practice, are again no cause for disrupting or preventing Church fellowship.

XII

Eph. 2:19-22—"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

THESIS XII

We affirm our conviction that our Lord has richly, singularly, and undeservedly blessed our beloved Synod during the first century of its existence in America. We pledge the efforts of our hearts and hands to the building of Synod as the second century opens and new opportunities are given us by the Lord of the Church.

This thesis is not merely a pious and meaningless appendage to the *Statement*. On the contrary, it gives expression to the deeply rooted and mature sentiments of our hearts. We rejoice in the rich spiritual treasures with which God has blessed our Synod and we are deeply grateful for them. Moreover, we love our Synod with a love that is genuine and sincere. We would do everything within our power to preserve for it the sound evangelical Lutheranism of our Confessions and of our sainted fathers who founded it. Moreover, we are determined to avoid anything and everything which may bring harm to it or impede the progress of its God-appointed work in this country and throughout the world. To this end we pledge the efforts of our hearts and hands to the building of Synod and the promotion of its manifold endeavors. It is our sincere hope that also the *Statement* may become an instrument in the hands of God for refining the spiritual life and promoting the work of our Synod.

On February 12-14, 1946, the epoch-making Home Missions Conference was held in Detroit. According to reports this was an inspiring assem-

blage. Ambitious plans were laid for the missionary expansion of our Church. Far-flung horizons were unfolded. But let us not forget that the high idealism of this Conference and the great program developed by the same can never be translated into a blessed reality unless the principles which we have stressed in the *Statement* are honored and cultivated and the problems to which we have directed attention are solved at least in part. After all, the Church's life and work, also in the vast domain of missionary endeavor, must be completely dominated and directed by the two great emphases of the New Testament—Truth and Love.

APPENDIX

Propositions on Unevangelical Practice

Presented at the Central District of the Missouri Synod, 1862. H.C. Schwann
by ~~C. F. W. W. W. W.~~

1. Evangelical practice consists not in this, that we teach and treat nothing except the evangelical message (the Gospel), but in this, that we treat everything in evangelical fashion.

2. This means that since we expect justification before God, the renewal of the heart, and the fruits of the Spirit only through the Gospel, we in everything that we do have this one thing in mind, to give free course and sway to the Gospel.

3. For this very reason, when we follow evangelical practice, we do not discard the Law or make its edges dull through bringing in the Gospel, but we rather preach it with all the more seriousness in its full severity, however in evangelical fashion.

4. The Law is used in an evangelical way if it is employed solely for the purpose of preparing the soil for the evangelical message (the Gospel) and of submitting a divine norm for the manifestations of the new life which spontaneously arises through the evangelical message.

5. It is not evangelical practice to cast the pearls before the swine, but much less is it evangelical practice to keep them in one's own pocket.

6. Evangelical practice drops not one iota of the things which God demands, but it demands nothing else and no more than faith and love.

7. Evangelical practice demands manifestation of faith and love if we desire to be saved, but it does not issue commands about their various manifestations as far as aim, amount, and mode are concerned.

8. Evangelical practice demands fulfillment of even the smallest letter of the Law, but it does not make the state of grace dependent on the keeping of the Law.

9. Evangelical practice endeavors indeed to prepare the way for the operations of the Gospel by the Law; but it does not endeavor to aid the Gospel in its real functions by the Law; and since it expects the fruits of the Spirit to be produced solely by the Gospel, it is willing to wait for them, too.

10. Evangelical practice considers nothing an essential gain that does not come through the Gospel, that is, through faith; therefore it rather bears with all manner of defects, imperfections, and sins than to remove them merely in an external manner.

11. Evangelical practice limits pastoral care (*Seelsorge*) to specific applications of the Law and the Gospel; the scrutiny and judging of the hearts it leaves to God, the Searcher of hearts.

12. Evangelical practice insists on good human order, but still more does it insist on Christian liberty, and for that reason it lets *adiaphora* remain real *adiaphora*, that is, it leaves the decision concerning them to the conscience of the individual.

13. Evangelical practice is faithful in little things; yet it considers matters in their larger aspects and totality more important than individual details.

14. To be wise as serpents, to redeem the time, not to let Satan gain an advantage over us, to become all things to all men in order that by all means some might be saved, are likewise elements of evangelical practice.

15. Evangelical practice is equally far removed from Antinomian and from legalistic practice.

16. Evangelical knowledge and disposition should issue in evangelical practice, but do so rather seldom and slowly.

17. Usually we do not advance beyond legalism, or we fall into Antinomian laxity; to such an extent the Gospel is foreign to our nature.

18. There is danger in both directions. For us at present the greater danger is still in the direction of legalism.

19. Apart from the natural tendency of the old Adam and our origin in pietistic circles, etc., our present situation and the necessary reaction against the prevailing moral laxity in principles and in life are responsible for this state of affairs.

20. Or how many are there not who secretly fear more to give the blessings of the Gospel to an unworthy person than to deny them to a poor sinner or to curtail them? Whose conscience is not hindering him to follow the example of Paul and to become all things to all men? But where this is the case, one surely still finds legalistic practice.

21. Legalistic practice does not consist in this, that one does not treat anything except the Law, but in this, that one treats everything in a legalistic manner, that is, in such a way that one's main aim is to see to it that the Law gets its due and that one tries to accomplish through the Law or even through laws what only the Gospel can accomplish.

22. In addition, the more (as is often the case where the inner motive power really still is the Law) fiery zeal asserts itself which not even permits love to be the queen of all commandments, which spurns Christian wisdom as its counselor, and which even when it appears merely to teach, to reprove or to admonish, in reality applies coercion, and at that the worst kind of it, namely, moral coercion—all the more unevangelical our practice gets to be.

23. Unevangelical, legalistic practice is found not only in churches and congregations, but likewise in schools and in the homes, and besides in our fraternal intercourse.

24. The instances of unevangelical practice which are still most frequent with us in the realm of ministerial work, the cure of souls, and congregational government are perhaps the following:

a. In sermons: overabundant castigation (*durchgeisseln*) of individual sins, unwholesome conditions or perhaps even of matters of personal dislike—the portraying of well-known sins of well-known persons, instead of laying bare the bitter roots out of which all evil fruits grow—mere so-called testifying without real instruction and admonition—unnecessary or premature or unedifying polemics—urging that repentance and faith be manifested, instead of preaching that which produces repentance and faith—a pietistic classification of the hearers—attaching conditions to the Gospel promises (*Verklausulierung des Evangelii*)—preaching faith preponderatingly as to

its sanctifying power—presentation of the grace of God only to build demands on such presentation;

b. With respect to Confession and the Lord's Supper:

To demand more for admission than is absolutely required for its salutary use—schoolroom catechizing and inquisitorial searching of the heart of those announcing—postponing reproof till announcement for Communion or Confession—to use refusal of Holy Communion as a coercive, terrifying or disciplinary means—to refuse even when a state of unrepentance cannot be proved;

c. With respect to Baptism:

To be either entirely unwilling to baptize children of heretics or unbelieving people who, however, are in contact with the Word (*die unter dem Schall des Wortes leben*), even if there is no intrusion in somebody else's domain (*in ein fremd Amt greifen*) or only after various human guarantees have been given—to put the acceptance of sponsors on a level with admission to Holy Communion;

d. At marriages:

To refuse to perform marriages of people who are outside the congregation even if they are not manifestly wicked—a meticulous insistence on a certain form of parental consent and of engagement;

e. At funerals.

Absolute refusal of burial in the case of all who did not somehow belong to the congregation or at least requested the visit of the pastor—adherence to the principle that at every funeral the salvation or damnation of the deceased must be asserted publicly, that sins have to be castigated and the occasion must be used to take a fling (*anzustechen*) at the sins and failings of the survivors;

f. In the care of souls:

Constant trimming and pressing (*hobeln und feilen*) on everybody till all wrinkles have been removed—acceptance of every kind of gossip (*Zuträgereien*)—mixing into house, family, and matrimonial matters even if no public offense has been given—to judge of one's attitude of heart on the basis of a few words and works—the application of moral coercion through exaggeration, etc.;

g. In congregational government and church discipline:

Exaggerated demands at the reception of new members—a denial of, or peremptory fixing of time limits for, participation in the spiritual treasures of the Church as a guest, especially for attendance at the Lord's Table—mandatory imposition of dues on church members, requiring the same amount from all—or coercive taxing of the individuals—use of church discipline as a measure against matters which are not evident, mortal sins, or even against self-provoked sins—to consider a person as convicted in his own mind or as opposing maliciously because he is not able to reply to the arguments and charges uttered against him, or even assents—to lay more weight on the correct form of the proceedings than on the achieving of the purpose of the discipline—to demand the same form and the same degree of publicity for all confessions of sins which may have to be made—the endeavor to make the chasm between those who are in and those who are outside the congregation really large, instead of building bridges for the opponents and for those who are on the outside.

25. Legalistic practice in itself makes the Gospel law, the Law a task-master (but not unto Christ) ; it makes confession a torture, the cure of souls hypocritical fawning; the Sacrament a testimony and seal that one is acceptable (to the pastor) ; it makes Christian liberty a mere pretense, church discipline an oppression of consciences, the people painfully meticulous, self-righteously pharisaical, and the church a police institution.

26. Legalistic practice has the appearance of greater conscientiousness, courage, and quicker success only for the blind. Looked at carefully it lacks true courage to allow God to reign and His Word to work. Its conscientiousness is that of an erring conscience and in itself one of the greatest hindrances of the working of the Law as well as of the Gospel.

27. Legalistic practice behooves no church less than the Evangelical Lutheran.

28. To make the fine customs of old established churches the standard for such as are in process of establishment—is not Lutheran.

29. There are plenty of things in which we cannot avoid giving offense; let us not give it by unnecessary severity in practice.

30. Let us courageously make an end of all unevangelical practice; but let us not forget that there is but one step from legalistic to antinomian practice.

31. Antinomian practice would beware of legalism and would effect everything only by the Gospel. But since it lacks the severity of the Law it also lacks the fervor of the Gospel. Therefore it will result in laxity and undisciplined conduct.

32. If we fall from legalistic into antinomian practice, evil has become worse.